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THE PRIESTHOOD AND SACRIFICE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

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The Priesthood and Sacrifice
OF
Our Lord Jesus Christ

BY

J. GRIMAL, S. M.

Adapted by the Author from the Third French Edition

Translated by

M. J. KEYES, S. M.

Il n'y a rien de plus grand dans l'univers que Jésus-Christ et il n'y a rien de plus grand en Jésus-Christ que son sacrifice.—*Bossuet*

PHILADELPHIA
JOHN JOSEPH McVEY
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VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION.

The object of this study is clearly indicated by its title. The words of Bossuet quoted on the title page reveal this object to us in all its greatness. Bossuet, however, seems only to condense the idea of P. Quesnel, who, in his Preface to Father Condren's work *L'Idée du Sacerdoce et du Sacrifice*, wrote: "The masterpiece of God is Jesus Christ, and the masterpiece of Jesus is His Church and His religion. But that which is greatest, most holy, and most august in Jesus Christ, in His Church, and in the Christian religion, is His priesthood and His sacrifice. His priesthood is the object of His Incarnation, as His Incarnation is the source of His priesthood. The Son of God is made man only to be the Priest of His Father, the Pontiff of the true religion; and He is a priest, as St. Paul teaches (Heb. V), only because He is the Son of God. But the end of the priesthood of the Son of God being His sacrifice, from this it follows that the science of the Christian religion consists in the true knowledge of the Incarnation, the priesthood, and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ."

Indeed, the whole religious history of the human race, its entire religious life, on earth and in heaven, is centered in the infinite sacrifice offered up by the eternal Pontiff. The Cross is foreshadowed in ancient worship; the Cross is the foundation of Christianity, to which, especially through the Blessed

Eucharist, it gives light and life; heaven itself is but the glorious consummation of the Cross.

To cover so vast a subject this study is divided into four parts:

1. Preparation: Jesus, Priest and Victim, is prefigured and foretold by the ancient priesthood and sacrifice.

2. Realization: Jesus, constituted a priest pre-eminently by the Incarnation itself, offers the infinite sacrifice on the altar of the Cross.

3. Heavenly Consummation: Jesus, the eternal Pontiff, enters heaven as the true Saint of saints, there to bring to its perfection and consummation the unique sacrifice of the Cross. This He does by opening heaven to the elect, who now through His death possess the promises of the New Testament; but above all, by eternally offering to the Father the homage of His holy humanity, united with the homage of the Blessed, His mystical body, in that state of glory which is the necessary confirmation and consequence of the efficacy of the Cross.

4. The Eucharistic Continuation: In the Blessed Eucharist, Jesus, the High Priest, renews to the very end of time the oblation of the Cross. His aim in this is to constitute for His Church a perfect sacrifice, in which she may offer herself through Him and with Him; and to hold forth to Christians a means of being united with the Victim, who conducts them to the heavenly Consummation by incorporating them with His death.

When the first French edition of this work appeared, some objected that in the *First Part* or

Preparation two things entirely opposed in origin and character—the pagan and Jewish religious practices—had been placed on the same plane. We certainly admit that there is a vast difference between them; and we think, moreover, that in the course of this work all necessary distinctions have been made. For the rest, if it is true that, in spite of the part played by the lower passions, or even perhaps by diabolical influence, the origin of the Gentile religions can be traced only to a primitive revelation, or at least to the most noble instincts of the human soul; if it is true that, in spite of corrupting change, these religions preserve the traits essential to all sacrifice—Substitution, Covenant, Communion,—and the notes of every priesthood—Election, Purification, and Consecration to the service of the altar,—why can we not see in Jesus and in His sacrifice the realization of all that was fundamental, noble and pure, if not indeed primitively revealed, in the religion of the great races of antiquity; just as we see on the altar of the Cross the fulfilment of the figures divinely instituted for the People of Israel? *Illud (sacrificium crucis) natura animæ ægra sed inseminatæ veritatis non omnino cassa, suspirabat.* (Thomassin: *De Inc. Verbi*, X, Chap. VI, 5.)

Others think that in the *Third Part* or Consummation we do not sufficiently guard against the doubtful theories held by some partisans of a heavenly sacrifice. In any case, they say, we should, by very clear formulas, by true definitions, bring out the precise nature of this heavenly priesthood. We may answer that so far as doubtful theories are

concerned, we have been careful, not to say scrupulous, to guard against them. This we shall have occasion to repeat when we come to mention the masters we have followed. But as to precise formulas and definitions, we must confess that, of set purpose, we have avoided giving any abstract definition of sacrifice, either properly so called, or *secundum quid*. In the *Third Part*, as throughout the book, we rest on the facts as disclosed to us by history and revelation. The Epistle to the Hebrews and the theology of St. Paul on the Resurrection, show us how intimate is the relation between the efficacious sacrifice of the Cross and the glorious life of Jesus and of the saints in heaven. This fact we have endeavored to set forth in clear light. Some uncertainty, or rather, mystery, no doubt remains. For "these things the eye of man hath not seen." It matters not; the little we have been able to see gives us a higher, a clearer idea of heaven and the Cross.

But yet, some might say, it were better not to develop at so great a length those two questions, which, after all, do not seem to be integral to the dogma of the priesthood. The PREPARATION would fit in better as a kind of Introduction, while the CONSUMMATION would serve as an Appendix or Conclusion.

To go directly to the feet of our Pontiff, and to prostrate ourselves there in contemplation of His sacred ministry both on the Cross and on the Eucharistic altar—this we could certainly have done. The central point of our study, that on which Revelation has thrown the most light and from which

can be drawn the most practical conclusions, is the priesthood of Jesus Himself as He offers the infinite oblation on the Cross and renews it by the ministry of His priests to the end of time. But to treat the PREPARATION and CONSUMMATION summarily by way of Introduction or Appendix would seem to us to lessen the greatness of the dogma of Christ's eternal priesthood and infinitely efficacious sacrifice. The Sanctuary of our Pontiff is disclosed to us in all its beauty and true glory only when we approach it, as if by a majestic portico, through the religious life of ages past, and then behold above the altar of the Cross the eternal adoration in heaven like a dome of glory crowning all. Without Bernini's Colonnade and Michael Angelo's Cupola could St. Peter's be called "the only work of man which has something in it of the grandeur of the works of God"? Those long rows of columns, opening like gigantic arms to embrace the world, make a worthy approach to the TEMPLE of the Catholic Jerusalem. The dome, colossal and light, while it strengthens, at the same time relieves, the mighty structure; and it throws through the vast naves, on the polished marble and rich gold of altars and vaults, a special resplendence bringing to mind the Living Light which illumines the Sanctuary of heaven. And just as columns and dome and nave and altar must not be viewed alone, but as parts which go to make up the beauty of man's masterpiece; so also the dogma of Christ's priesthood and sacrifice, God's own masterpiece, must be seen in that harmonious and splendid entirety, which em-

braces the centuries of religious life upon earth and the eternity of adoration in heaven.

*
* *

Our purpose is not so much to prove the dogma of the priesthood as to cause it to be dwelt upon, so that from its consideration there may be drawn vital conclusions concerning our greatness, our obligations, and our strength as priests. These pages were sketched in the first place by a professor for his students. He wished to help seminarians and young priests to prepare better for ordination or to understand more clearly their priesthood and sacrifice. The work has still the same character, still the same destination. It is only a treatise of dogmatic theology developed with a view to piety.

First of all, the Epistle to the Hebrews shows us, in the *Second Part*, how Christ was constituted the supreme Pontiff of the Christian religion by His Incarnation itself. After this we dwell on our priesthood, the very priesthood of Jesus, which makes us other Christs, and we proceed to trace Mary's part in the foundation and exercise of our calling. Having proved against Liberal criticism that the idea of a sacrificial death is a real part of the message of Jesus, we devoutly contemplate Jesus as Priest and Victim in the great act of sacrifice, and we learn to follow Him in a priestly Way of the Cross. In the *Fourth Part* especially, the dogmatic thesis will be interspersed with practical applications on Mass and Communion, on preaching the Eucharist, on our

own personal faith in that Living Bread, and lastly, on our death, our final sacrifice.

This blending, indeed, may not appeal to some. To them the rapid change from theological thesis to meditation may be disconcerting. They would prefer a work in two volumes, one of which would be devoted exclusively to dogma, the other to practical conclusions. By a more skillful arrangement of transitions we might perhaps have been able to unite doctrine and piety more naturally; but we would never consent to separate them. To repeat what we have said: This book is a thesis of theology, developed solely in the interest of piety. For us the thesis has no value apart from its conclusions, which in turn can have no strength when separated from the thesis on which they are based. Doctrine and piety form one living whole, the Word of God complete, truth and life.

* * *

Evidently, the Word of God must be the basis or the source of this study.

The apparently scientific method of treatment followed in the *First Part* with its glimpse into the history of religions might lead one to suppose that we aim at establishing there the foundation of our study. Suffice it to say that the *First Part* was not intended to be, nor is it, the foundation; it is simply, as we have said, but the entrance, the portico, as it were, of the building. Nor do we pretend in this part to make, from a strictly scientific point of view, a comparative study of sacrifice as found in the various religions. Taking for granted the

divine institution and the figurative meaning of the Levitical priesthood and sacrifice, we wish simply to bring into bold relief and emphasize the traits of Jewish worship which appear to presage more clearly the sacrifice of the Cross. But, as occasion offers, and basing our assertions on trustworthy witnesses, we gladly record in pagan religions various features which correspond in different degrees with the figurative traits of Jewish worship.

Our thesis will rest on revealed dogma alone. This dogma we shall find partly in the Old Testament with its preparatory priesthood and sacrifice, but especially in the New Testament with its Gospels and Epistles,—notably the Epistle to the Hebrews,—which describe the true priesthood, the priesthood and sacrifice of the Cross and of the Eucharistic altar.

We shall approach these writings led and lighted on our way by competent guides; we shall study them with those masters so providentially raised up in the seventeenth century to revive the true idea of the Christian priesthood: with Bérulle and Condren, who founded the Oratory "to aim at the perfection of the priesthood" and to teach all who serve at the altar that they ought to be "religious of Christ from the very fact that they are priests,"—with St. Vincent de Paul, the model priest, who initiated the *Conferences of St. Lazarus* and so actively promoted ecclesiastical reform,—with Olier, the author of *Pietas Seminarii* and *Traité des Saints Ordres*, who founded the Society of St. Sulpice, which has been ever since in France, what it became later on in America, the

representative and upholder of priestly ideals,—with Thomassin who, in the Tenth Book of his *Treatise on the Incarnation,* gives us a volume which is a prodigy of science and a hymn of piety in honor of Christ as priest,—with Bossuet finally, who, prepared by his attendance at the lectures of St. Vincent de Paul, became the incomparable doctor and poet of the Last Supper, of the Cross, and of heaven.

Bossuet especially we shall often quote. For this we offer no excuse. He alone, in his inimitable style, has worthily interpreted the sublime theology of the divine priesthood. At the same time it is rare indeed when we may not follow him in perfect security. Rising above controversy and subtlety his genius soars aloft in the contemplation of dogma pure and undefiled.

Obscure and debatable views may be found, however, in the other masters mentioned above. Their personal theories we avoid scrupulously: the faith and piety of the priest are satisfied only by doctrinal conclusions or practical applications resting on pure dogma, or at least on deductions clearly and forcibly connected with dogma. The exaggerated expressions or suspected theories of these masters we point out when necessary; but their disciples we never cease to be. Nor can we ever fail to venerate them as men raised up by God Himself. For raised up by God they were as teachers of the eternal priesthood and apostles of priestly holiness. Enamored of the sacerdotal ideal, they strove by making known its grandeur to priests, to lead them to realize the ideal itself in their lives. St. Vincent,

Condren, Olier, Blessed Eudes, and all those whom at that great epoch of Catholic *Renaissance* God raised up for the reformation of the clergy, enlightened before they attempted to sanctify, or rather, they enlightened in order to sanctify.

Now as then, here as well as in Europe, the first need of the priest is to learn in the school of these masters the theology of his priesthood and the secret of his grandeur in Jesus. The holy duties of his state he will fulfil only in so far as he meditates in Jesus upon the greatness of the obligations placed on his shoulders with the vestments of Christ.

Justly did His Eminence, Cardinal Gibbons, remark at the commencement exercises of St. Charles' College, June, 1912, that it was Providence itself which, at the time when the Hierarchy was being established in the young Republic of the West, sent hither the sons of Olier. Called of necessity to the intensely active mission of preaching, of building churches and schools throughout an immense continent, the American clergy had need of a proportionately intense interior life to serve as a counterpoise of safety, or rather, as a true spring of spiritual energy and apostolic activity. The magnificent results of their labors, of which we are witness to-day, could not be explained otherwise than by the germ of interior life deposited in the hearts of our priests under the immediate direction, or at least through the spirit, of the venerable founders of the first American seminary; for though St. Sulpice could not take charge of all our seminaries, it may well be said that all the new foundations for

the ecclesiastical training of young men have felt the influence of St. Mary's and have been, to a more or less extent, modeled after it.

It could not well have been otherwise. Inspired by the Council of Trent and the spirit of St. Charles Borromeo, Fr. Olier made incarnate in his *Society* the wisdom of the Church itself for the training of priests. His disciples saw in the priest more than a man of character, more than a man of force and activity. To the soul which was to receive the very imprint of Christ they always held forth the Savior in the beauty of His priesthood as an ideal; for they well knew that the priest in realizing that ideal would become also a man endowed with every energy, with true nobility.

Striving ever for this interior and doctrinal formation of the clergy and professing to see in this little book some of the spirit of their founder, the venerable Sulpicians of Baltimore have encouraged its American adaptation and English translation. Thus it is that the work of one of their most grateful alumni is the work of St. Sulpice in a twofold manner: in its first inspiration and in its present adaptation. If it should happen to be of service to any one, the credit belongs entirely to those devoted teachers. The author is well aware that no other recommendation than theirs is necessary to bring the result of his efforts to the favorable notice of the American priest.

St. Mary's Manor, Pa.,

Holy Thursday, 1915.

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FIRST PART.

PREPARATION.

JESUS, PRIEST AND VICTIM, IS PREFIGURED AND FORETOLD BY THE ANCIENT PRIESTHOOD AND SACRIFICE.

CHAPTER I.

The Universality of Sacrifice.

Throughout all antiquity, pagan and Jewish, at the center of religious life we find sacrifice, the supreme act of worship, and it always consists in the offering and destruction of a victim in honor of the Deity.

The universal fact of sacrifice may be variously interpreted; the fact itself cannot be denied. Everywhere the supreme act of worship consists in the offering and the destruction, real or equivalent, of a victim in honor of the Divinity. "Sacrifice is found in all religions from the very beginning, at least as far back as we can go toward those beginnings. It consists always in an immolation which varies according to the thing offered." [1]

I.

The large place held by sacrifice in the life of pagan antiquity is revealed by the numerous inscriptions collected in the various Corpus, by the bas-reliefs as well as by the ex-voto and other archæological monuments, but better still, by the testimony of the classical authors of Greece and Rome.

[1] Lagrange, *Etudes sur les Religions Sémitiques*, Paris, 1905, p. 247.

The Greeks, ever fond of travel and quick to notice the various customs of foreign lands, describe the religions of Asia and Egypt nearly as well as their own. Restricted at home to a narrow territory, almost surrounded by the sea and situated on the borders of that archipelago whose isles served as stepping stones to lands afar, this people covered with their colonies the Mediterranean seaboard. Their writers, intrepid also, and more inquisitive than the ordinary colonists, pressed far beyond the latter, further than Ulysses in his mythical wanderings over lands and seas unknown. Of religious life in other climes they give us their experiences, and these will help to show us, at least in part, the customs prevalent among the peoples of their time.

The foremost of these adventurous writers was Homer himself. That he traveled a great deal and saw much cannot be denied. The picture he draws of the Edes, those poets who wandered from city to city, singing their songs at the end of the banquets and religious feasts, could well be applied to his own life. Everywhere in his travels he finds a living popular worship, a worship which is expressed particularly by means of various sacrifices, from the modest offering of the domestic hearth up to the solemn hecatomb immolated in the name of the entire people. He bears testimony to the power—in which he believes himself—of these sacred rites to appease the gods, to obtain or preserve their favor. Herodotus, also, who four or five centuries later visited all the places then famous, towns and temples, in Egypt, Libya, Phœnicia, and Babylon, in Thrace, in

the islands and the mainland of Greece, represents society as made up everywhere of religious bodies grouped around the altar. The same picture is unfolded to our view when, on the eve of our era, Strabo, the learned *geographical* observer, and Diodorus of Sicily, the compiler of the *Historical Library*, picture for us the religious life of Egypt, Chaldea, and Persia. Pausanias limits his *Description*, as also his travels, to European Greece; but his memorandums, exact and detailed as they are, place before our gaze a photograph, as it were, of famous sanctuaries, of serving priests, and immense crowds attending sacrifice. And many times since then, archæological discoveries made on the shores of the Ægean Sea or on the plains of Chaldea have confirmed and made clear the testimony of Herodotus, Diodorus, and Pausanias.

The Latin writers, less rich in information concerning the religions of other nations, are also somewhat unsatisfactory when they treat of their own religious past. For them Rome was the world; and obscure beginnings borrowed a deceptive splendor from the glory of succeeding centuries. Valuable information, however, can be gathered from the fragments of Varro, from the *Decades* of Titus Livius, "the Roman Herodotus," but above all, from Vergil, who, as Macrobius relates, has spoken learnedly, and like one of the "initiated," on sacred things. Macrobius himself, who, in the Third Book of the *Saturnalia* sets forth so well Vergil's liturgical science, should be read carefully; he comments on the sacred texts, if not as a belated adherent of

dying paganism, at least as an amateur or expert on religious antiquity.

But our aim is not to bring together or use all these materials. We simply wish to call passing attention to some ancient sources.[1]

II.

The all important place held by sacrifice in the life of the Patriarchs and the People of God is clearly set forth in the Bible.

At the very outset, just immediately after it has given the names of the two children of Adam, Cain and Abel, Genesis mentions that they offered sacrifice (Gen. IV, 3-5). When the waters of the deluge had receded, Noah, to celebrate the restoration of the world and of the human race, built an altar and on it offered a sacrifice, the sweet savor of which the Lord breathed with pleasure (Gen. VIII, 20-21). From Abraham's First Call, the life of the Chosen Family was bound closely to the altar of Yaveh. Each new promise of divine blessings was the reward of sacrifice (Gen. XII-XIII, 18; XV, 7-21). The supreme test which called forth the most solemn pledge of Yaveh in favor of Abraham's race was nothing less than Abraham's consent to offer up Isaac, his only son, as the victim of a holocaust

[1] Cf. W. Denham Rouse, *Greek Votive Offerings: An Essay on the History of Greek Religion*, Cambridge, 1909. Fustel de Coulanges, *La Cité Antique*, 12th Ed., Paris, 1888. *Lectures on the History of Religions* (Catholic Truth Society), 1910-1911. Lagrange, *Etudes sur les Religions Sémitiques*, Chap. VII. Dhorme, *La Religion Assyro-Babylonienne*, Paris, 1910, 8e Leç.

(Gen. XXII, 1-18). Later on, the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb, which saved the first born of Israel, prefigured and led to the deliverance from Egyptian captivity (Exod. XII). Lastly, in the desert, at the foot of Mt. Sinai, Moses consecrated the Covenant in the blood of victims; in a word, the very existence of the People of God depended on sacrifice (Exod. XXIV, 4-14).

To this people, born of the altar, Moses gives a theocratic Law, of which ritualistic prescriptions, regulating in minute detail all that belongs to sacrifice, are the very soul. This liturgic code, so vast and so complicated, is explained by various commentators; but these we need not follow. Suffice it to recall the four bloody sacrifices: the holocaust, wherein the victim is entirely burned (Lev. I); the sacrifice for the sins of priests, people, and leaders (Lev. III, IV); the sacrifice for sin against either the laws of worship or proprietary rights (Lev. V, 1-7; 14-19); the peace sacrifice in thanksgiving or petition (Lev. VII, 13-36).

CHAPTER II.

The Idea of Substitution.

The most striking feature of ancient sacrifice appears to be the substitution of a victim offered and immolated in the name of man, either to redeem his life, or, at least, to represent his sentiments of adoration and expiation.

From man's very nature and his social condition we can *a priori* affirm the necessity of an exterior and public worship given to God in the name of society, a worship to be exhibited especially in an act particularly fitted and ordained to express the fundamental dispositions of the human soul in regard to its God. This special and supreme act of worship consists in sacrifice, a thing or act pre-eminently sacred.

The fundamental dispositions of which sacrifice is but the symbol we can also discover. Created by God, man should ever feel the hand of God over him; he should acknowledge His sovereign domain even to the right of life and death. If he has had the misfortune to sin, man, in atonement to the infinite Majesty, should acknowledge himself worthy of dire punishment and ready to wash away with his blood the stain left on his soul. These austere sentiments could be tempered with confidence in a mercy which pardons, and which reunites His children with their Heavenly Father; but the dominant note in the supreme act of worship should be the expression of

our dependence as creatures and our efficacious repentance as sinners. Immediately, then, it is evident that the symbolism which best expresses the dispositions of a man as a creature of God and a sinner will be the substitution and the destruction of a victim in God's honor, and, more especially, the offering up of an animal victim in bloody immolation. In no way could man better express his voluntary abjection before God than by substituting in his own place, and sacrificing, a domestic animal, thus protesting that God is the master of life and that the right to exist belongs to God alone. In no way could he more clearly manifest his repentance, his need and his wish of expiation at all costs, than by shedding the blood of the victim which represents him before divine Justice.

To define, therefore, the word sacrifice, or to state *a priori* what, in the actual order of things, a perfect sacrifice ought to be, we can say that it is the offering up and the destruction of a victim, more especially of a domestic animal, which victim has been substituted for sinful man and is thus offered up and destroyed to express man's adoration and expiation. It is needless to note that the religious value of this act does not depend primarily on the material value of the victim. Before God the exterior immolation will be estimated by the interior sentiments which accompany it.[1]

[1] D'Hulst, *Conférences de N. D.,* 1893, 2 Conf., pp. 56-58. E. E. Card. Billot, *De Sacramentis,* 1907, I, pp. 565-572. Cave, *The Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice and Atonement,* Edinburgh, 1890, pp. 44-50. Meschler, *The Sublimity of the Holy Eucharist,* London, 1910, Chap. I. Gihr, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass,* St. Louis, 1905, Bk. I, Chap. I.

Can we find any element of this definition in the sacrifices of the past? Amid the confusion of diverse traits can we distinguish in Jewish and in pagan sacrifice the idea of substitution, either as an objective price, a ransom paid for sin, or at least as a symbolic rite essentially fit to represent man's sentiments of adoration and repentance? This idea we certainly cannot find universally in the dispositions of those who worship, or in their understanding of the rites which they perform or attend; but in the first inspiration of the sacrifices, in their ritualistic signification, and, sometimes, even in the special choice and real value of the victim, we can perceive, even though vaguely, the human soul offering itself on the altar.

I.

The moving scene of the immolation of Isaac, the first born who represents the entire People of God, reveals to us the mystery of substitution accomplished on the Israelitic altar (Gen. XXII). In the passage of Genesis, which relates Abraham's sacrifice, God reveals His right to exact as a homage to His authority the surrendering of every form of life, even the most dear. Isaac and the people, whom he really represents, must consent to be bound, to be extended on the altar, there to be offered up to the Divine Majesty. At the last moment God spares the human life, contenting Himself with a ram offered as a holocaust in place of the only son (Gen. XXII, 13). But the value of the victim consists solely in his being a representative of, and a substi-

tute for, Isaac and the entire people. For this reason alone are the divine promises made to Abraham. He is blessed, not for having offered the ram, but for having sacrificed, in intention, his son to God; *quia fecisti hanc rem et non pepercisti filio tuo unigenito propter me, benedicam tibi* (Gen. XXII, 16-17). Israel will also be blessed only when its soul is placed on the altar by the side of the victim, thus giving life to the exterior rites through the spirit of adoration and repentance. Let it lose the sense of mysterious substitution and the blessings will cease. The offering itself without the animating spirit, far from being pleasing to the Lord, will be accounted an abomination in His sight. *Holocaustis non delectaberis; sacrificium Deo spiritus contribulatus; cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies* (Ps. L, 18-19).

The victims destined to fill the great role of substitution among the Hebrews were not selected at random. They were chosen from the animals having the closest relations with man by instinct, by habit, by service, *i. e.*, from the domestic animals who helped him in his work and nourished him with their flesh. "The most human victims," to use the apt expression of J. de Maistre, were taken for this purpose. The rites used in offering brought out more precisely the meaning of this choice. Whoever wished to offer a *holocaust*, or a *peace victim in thanksgiving* led the victim to the door of the Tabernacle, and there, just before the victim was immolated, extended his hand on its head. This was more than a pure sign of offering; it was the rite of dele-

gation or substitution, expressing that the victim was to die in the name and for the benefit of the offerer: *Ponetque manum supra caput hostiæ et erit in expiationem ejus proficiens* (Lev. I, 3-4; III, 2; IV, 4-15).[1]

In the *sacrifice for sin*, the victim is so evidently substituted for the sinner that it is called *sin*, just as if the iniquity of the human being were transferred to the victim (Lev. IV, 21-24, 32). This is shown especially on the *Day of Expiation*, a yearly solemnity, which expressed on a large scale the meaning of each expiatory sacrifice (Lev. XVI). The high priest offered first of all a calf for sin, *vitulum pro peccato* (3). Then two he-goats having been led up to the door of the Tabernacle, there the priest cast lots as to which should be offered to the Lord and which should be driven into the wilderness. The one designated for the altar was then immolated. Taking the blood, the high priest went beyond the veil into the Holy of Holies; he purified the Sanctuary, the Tabernacle, and the altar from the uncleanness of Israel, at the same time praying for himself and for all the people. When these purifications were accomplished, he offered the living goat in a special manner. Extending both hands over the animal and confessing the iniquities of the children of Israel, he prayed that all these offenses and sins with their punishment might fall on the victim's head (21). Thus burdened, the goat was driven into the wilderness carrying with him the crimes and

[1] Cf. Hummelauer, *Commentar. in Exod. et Lev.*, Paris, 1897, pp. 292-293 and p. 364.

sins of the people. This impressive ceremonial of the Scape-Goat, when considered in connection with the immolation of the two great expiatory victims, shows the latter in the clear light of victims substituted for the sins of all. Lastly, the question is placed beyond doubt by the testimony of God Himself, who declares in Leviticus that He is the author of this substitution which gives to the blood its expiatory virtue: *Anima carnis in sanguine est; et ego dedi illum vobis ut super altare in eo expietis pro animabus vestris, et sanguis pro animæ piaculo sit* (Lev. XVII, 11). As if He had said: Blood is the life or soul of the animal; that is why I have given it to you to represent, to take the place of, your sinful souls on the altar, that thus they may be purified.[1]

II.

Though not so clearly mentioned among pagans as among the Jews, the idea of substitution is boldly outlined as the most prominent feature of heathen sacrifice.

Various, indeed, is this sacrifice in form and signification: sometimes taken as an offering, an act of adoration or expiation, again as a repast given to the gods, or a work of magic, etc. At first sight it would even seem that the most primitive idea is that of an offering or a gift made to the divinity. But since this offering is an acknowledgment of the sovereign

[1] Cf. W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, London, 1894, pp. 421-431. E. D. Burton, etc., *Biblical Ideas of Atonement*, Chicago, 1909, Chap. II, III, pp. 3-41; Chap. XI, pp. 248-249.

dominion of the god, we are already very near the idea of substitution. This sovereign dominion embraces man himself; and it is to confess his personal dependence that man offers his gift, and not to bestow something on a needy deity. So true is this, that the gift is valued not so much according to any benefit accruing to the god as according to the price man attaches to it. The sacrifice of a royal heir is reputed more precious and more efficacious than a hecatomb. The victims have rather a relative and representative value: they have worth especially because of the human sentiments which they symbolize. Besides, at least among the other ancient Semites, we find the same sort of divine reservation placed on the effusion of blood, which we discover among the Jews. This shows that, at least in this great family of races, blood was regarded as peculiarly fit to represent the sacrifice of human life on the altar. Thus it is that the idea of substitution, either in its objective sense of ransom for sin and redemption of life, or at least in its purely symbolic meaning of adoration and repentance, finds a place more or less important in the most recent and most learned theories of sacrifice.[1]

A few instances in which the fact of substitution, even in its objective and strict sense of ransom paid

[1] In the 9th Ed. of the *Encyc. Brit.*, word "Sacrifice," p. 136, W. Robertson Smith says, "the idea of substitution is widespread through all early religions, and is found in honorific as well as in piacular rites." Though they have rejected Smith's theories on many points, Frazer, Marillier, Westermarck, Hubert and Mauss bring us back more or less directly to the idea of substitution. Cf. *Encyc. Brit.*, 11th Ed., word "Sacrifice."

for a life, is beyond doubt, will suffice for our purpose here.

In Babylon, while the lambs were being immolated, the offerer placed his hand upon them. Before the sacrifice for sin, the victim underwent a purification by water (lustration) as though penetrated and contaminated by human iniquity. The immolation once accomplished, the sinner is given an assurance of pardon; he is freed from his sin, which now lies dead with the victim on the altar.[1]

Herodotus in his account of Egyptian sacrifice gives us the prayer pronounced on the head of the victim to avert the evil which menaced either the sacrificers or Egypt in general. Among the Phœnicians, as also among the Egyptians, according to Porphyry and Plutarch, the victim had attached to it a seal bearing the image of a man on his knees and bound, his throat pierced with a sword. Every year at Athens, and every four years at Rome, there took place the public purification for uncleanness, or faults contracted in the worship of the gods. The victims being immolated in the name of the city by one of the first magistrates, the Archon or the Censor with all the heads of families were obliged to be present at the offering, so that the entire people should be truly represented in the victim and purified in its blood.[2]

[1] Lagrange, *Etudes sur les Religions Sémitiques,* pp. 224-235, and chiefly pp. 266-274. Dhorme, *La Religion Assyro-Babylonienne,* pp. 272-274.

[2] Herodotus, II, 38-39. Porphyry, *De Abstinentia Carnium,* II, 54; IV, 15. Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris,* 31. Fustel de Coulanges, *La Cité Antique,* "Le Cens et la Lustration," p. 186. W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites,* pp. 364-366.

An aberration of the instinct of substitution alone explains, or, at least, explains better than any other hypothesis, the human sacrifices, which so many times stained ancient sanctuaries.

The Phœnicians immolated their children to Moloch. Among the Romans there was a time when a like deplorable event took place. On the authority of an equivocal oracle of Apollo they sacrificed children to the goddess Mania, mother of Lares. *Ex responso Apollinis quo præceptum est ut pro capitibus (men) capitibus (men or poppies) supplicaretur id . . . aliquandiu observatum, ut pro familiarium sospitate pueri mactarentur Maniæ Deæ, Matri Larum* (Macrobius). At Carthage also, to prevent the anger of the gods, the blood of a citizen was shed every year on the altar.[1]

The classical type of substituted victims is found in Iphigenia. It matters little that she was not really immolated. According to the story, as told by Euripides, Diana at the last moment miraculously intervened, placing a hind on the altar in her place. It matters little whether the scene itself be only a poetic fiction, painted on canvas all but legendary. History or legend, it is always a striking testimony in favor of the universal belief in the mystery of substitution. If it can be said that a poet's dream at times contains more of truth than a historical document, may we not also say that sometimes legend reveals better than a mere fact the belief of a race?

[1] Porphyry, *De Abstinentia*, II, 56-58. Tertullian, *Apology*, 9. Macrobius, *Saturnalium Liber Primus*, Chap. VII, versus finem. Cf. also W. Robertson Smith, o. c., p. 366. Cf. *Encyc. Brit.*, 11th Ed., word "Sacrifice," pp. 983-984.

The fact, though materially true, might be only an abnormal exception, an isolated case; while the legend unveils a state or custom of life, an idea commonly received. The idea which underlies the drama of Iphigenia—that a noble soul, a pure life, when sacrificed, can expiate the faults of a people or family—may be found in the *Antigonus* and the *Œdipus Rex* of Sophocles. Æschylus, the first of the Greek tragedians, had already incorporated the same idea in his *Prometheus Bound.* Long did the Titan remain chained to a rock; an eagle comes each day to eat of his liver, which each night is healed again to become the means of new suffering. His torture will last until such time as one of the Immortals will consent to suffer in his place: "Neither," says Hermes, the messenger of Jupiter, to the sufferer, "look for any respite from this agony, unless some God shall appear as a voluntary successor to thy toils, and of his own free will goeth down to sunless Hades and the dark depths of Tartarus." [1]

An aberration we have called this sacrifice of human beings; and the word is only too true. But is it not strange to see how these wandering and false fancies of the most ancient, as well as the most popular myth of Greece, reach out to a vision, a divination of a Just One, a God, substituted and dying for sinful humanity?

[1] The *Prometheus Bound* of Æschylus, translated by P. E. More, Boston, 1899, p. 103.

CHAPTER III.

The Idea of Covenant.

The principal effect of ancient sacrifices appears to have been the creating or maintaining of a sort of covenant through which the Divinity united Himself by a kind of family bond to the members of the religious society and admitted them to a share in His good.

The homage and reparation offered to Him by man through the immolation of various victims God acknowledged by granting pardon and peace, but better still, by contracting a family pact with the clan or nation which had offered the sacrifice. Almost everywhere in antiquity, the social bond has a religious character, and is closely connected with the altar. The people of the same country are united together, because by means of sacrifice they are connected with, and, as it were, related to, the same God.

I.

When we wish to trace the genesis of the Chosen People we must begin at the altar.

All the promises made to Abraham are connected with sacrifice (Gen. XII-XXII); the finally decisive oath being the direct reward for the oblation of Isaac. "By my own self have I sworn, saith the Lord; because thou hast done this thing and hast

not spared thy only begotten son for my sake; I will bless thee, and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven . . ." (Gen. XXII, 16-17).

When Israel rises to the dignity of a true nation, two words sum up its organization and national life: Testament and Tabernacle, two institutions essentially connected with sacrifice.

The Testament or pact which unites Yaveh to Israel is sealed and consecrated in victims' blood. On the day of its publication, Moses caused holocausts to be offered and pacific victims to be sacrificed. Having reserved half of the victimal blood, the great Lawgiver poured the rest upon the altar. Then opening the Book of the Covenant, he read it in the hearing of the people. There Yaveh proclaims Himself the only and jealous God of Israel; He assures His blessings to the people as to a chosen family, and promises to give them as a heritage the land of Canaan; but on the condition that Israel will keep His Commandments forever. The reading having ended, the multitude cried out: "All things that the Lord hath spoken we will do." Then Moses sprinkled the people with the blood which he had reserved, saying: "This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words" (Exod. XXIV, 4-8).

The Tabernacle will be the sanctuary of the Lord, and there He will dwell in the midst of His People. "And they shall make me a sanctuary, and I will dwell in the midst of them" (Exod. XXV, 8). From this Sanctuary He will give forth His oracles and bestow His mercies. Sacrifice is the essential condi-

tion, we might say the cause, of this palpable presence of the Lord. Not only is it prescribed that sacrifice should not be offered except at the threshold of the Tabernacle (Lev. I, 3—III, 2; IV, 4—XVII, 4); but it is also expressly declared that the divine manifestations and presence are linked with perpetual sacrifice. "This is what thou shalt sacrifice upon the altar. Two lambs of a year old, every day continually. One lamb in the morning and another in the evening . . . for a savor of sweetness: It is a sacrifice to the Lord, by perpetual oblation unto your generations, at the door of the tabernacle of the testimony before the Lord, where I will appoint to speak unto thee. And there I will command the children of Israel and the altar shall be sanctified by my glory. I will sanctify also the tabernacle of the testimony with the altar . . .; and I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel, and will be their God" (Exod. XXIX, 38-45).

II.

Among the other Semites, as among the Jews, individual sacrifice was but a secondary element of worship. The fully liturgical sacrifice was the offering made by the family, the tribe, the nation, which created a bond of union, or strengthened an already existing covenant, between the gods and the society.

Many are the details in the Semitic religions which remind us of the Tabernacle and Testament of Israel. Within the holy inclosure, the special dwelling-place of the divinity, or on the votive stones which recalled

that divinity's power, was the regular place of sacrifice. Because he belonged to the altar, the priest was the authorized *soothsayer.* If he approached the "Place of Judgment" without an offering, the god would reveal no mysteries. The oracle was the divine answer to human presents. It was by the blood spilled on the altar that reconciliations and contracts were confirmed. By participating in the same sacrifice, two men became allied as brothers in the deity. The bond of religion, moreover, was stronger than the ties of birth. In general, to be born in the tribe did not suffice to associate one with it; in addition, it was necessary to be consecrated to the god by ritualistic initiations, all in some way connected with sacrifice, and of these initiations Circumcision was the principal; it was a national seal only insomuch as it was a bloody sign of alliance with the god of the family. Finally, it was owing to sacrifice that the god remained truly the protector, the first citizen and the king of an Assyro-Babylonian city.[1]

Tracing Græco-Roman institutions to their source, Fustel de Coulanges finds that they have their origin in religious belief and sacrificial rites. It was around the altar that the family, the *gens (gentilitium),* the *curiæ* and tribes, and at last, the city gradually developed.[2]

[1] Cf. Lagrange, *Etudes sur les Religions Sémitiques,* passim, especially pp. 224-230, 242-246. Dhorme, *La Religion Assyro-Babylonienne,* 4e Leç., "Les Dieux et la cité." Cf. also *Lectures on the History of Religions,* London, 1910, I: "Babylonia and Assyria," by A. Condamin. Cf. also W. R. Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites,* pp. 312-321.

[2] *La Cité Antique,* 1888, passim, pp. 38, 40-59, 70, 113, 132, 136, 142, 143, 149, 160, 166.

Religion was at first domestic. The divinity protected only a family. Generation established a mysterious bond between the child who was born to life and the fireside gods. Family ties were made and maintained by the sacrifice which the father offered on the fireside altars. Property rights also, in each family, were sanctioned by sacrifice; the stones *(termini)* which marked the boundary of a field were thrust into the very place where the father had caused the blood of a victim to flow. When the domestic society in its expansion became a *gens (gentilitium)*, the newly grouped members were known by their sacrificing in common; for such was the legal characteristic of a *gens*. When several families were gathered together in *phratries*, a superior divinity with a special altar became theirs in common. When the *phratries* in turn became only parts of a higher division called the tribe, and the tribes themselves became amalgamated in the city, the ties of blood in the formation of each successive society counted for nothing: the grouping was entirely religious; and, on the site where the capital or center of the city was to be erected, sacrifices were offered so that the protecting deity might be induced there to take up his fixed abode. It was hoped that sacrificial offerings would determine the god to live in the new town in common with the citizens as the first among them or the father. "Come with us, O beings divine, and with us dwell in this city!" said the priest as he sprinkled the chosen place with victimal blood.

CHAPTER IV.

Communion.

This twofold idea of substitution and covenant is synthesized and completed in the rite of communion which ordinarily terminated the ancient sacrifice: by eating the victim substituted for him, man identifies himself, offers himself, and immolates himself the more surely with that victim; by eating the victim which has now become a divine or sacred thing, man, seated as a friend at the table of God, becomes in a certain sense holy and divine.

I.

The Mosaic Law mentions communion only to determine some of its conditions, at times restricting it to the priests or even forbidding it altogether. But the very fact of these prohibitions or restrictions would prove that the sacrifice was partaken of in communion unless otherwise forbidden.

The holocaust did not admit of communion. Three times does the first chapter of Leviticus repeat that the victim must be entirely consumed by fire on the altar (Lev. I, 9, 13, 17). In the two principal expiatory sacrifices, for the sins of the people or of the high priest, the chosen portions of fat, and sometimes also, other parts, are to be burned on the altar in homage to divine Justice; all the rest, as if tainted, must be burned outside of the camp (Lev. IV, 10-19,

29). Likewise, the common expiatory victim for sin should never be partaken of by the donor nor by the people; but the Lord sets aside a part for the priests, who will eat it at the entrance of the tabernacle (Lev. VI, 25-29; X, 12, 13). It is also the priest alone, or the priest and his male children, who may partake of the unbloody oblation, the *Menachôth* of pure flour or of bread (Lev. II, 9, 10). Of the peace-offerings and the thanksgiving-oblations both priests and people may partake, provided they be not stained by any legal impurity (Lev. VII, 11-20). It may be added here that the eating of the Paschal Lamb in each family was also a kind of communion (Exod. XII, 43-49).

A very valuable document containing a kind of temple tariff which regulated what was to be set apart for the priest according to the nature of the sacrifice and the importance of the victim, shows us among the Cananæan Phœnicians the existence of distinctions identical in the main with those which we have observed among the Hebrews.[1]

There were holocausts of which nothing went to the offerer or to the priest; there were sacrifices of which a part went to the priest but nothing to the offerer; and finally others where both priest and offerer took for themselves that part of the victim which had not been placed on the altar.

The Romans and Greeks did not as a rule partake of the expiatory victims. But the non-expiatory

[1] See Lagrange, *Etudes sur les Religions Sémitiques*, 1905; Appendix X, p. 469, where this Document is cited and commented upon.

sacrifices, in Rome as well as in Greece, were ordinarily terminated by a sacred feast. Herodotus also speaks of the banquet which consummated the sacrifices offered by the Egyptians to their great goddess.[1]

II.

What was the meaning or the effect of this sacred feast? That it was supposed to have some sanctifying or deifying power nearly all agree. But when we try to determine the exact nature of that power we meet two widely different points of view. These we shall attempt to develop in the following pages.

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To the question of communion W. Robertson Smith has devoted the last six lectures of his work on the *Religion of the Semites;* and not only does he hold the theory of a deifying communion, but he sees there the primordial form of all sacrifice. "The ritual," he says, "exactly corresponds with the primitive ideas that holiness means kinship to the worshippers and their God, that all sacred relations and all moral obligations depend on physical unity of life, and that unity of life can be created or reinforced by common participation in living flesh and blood. . . . The fundamental idea of ancient sacrifice is sacramental communion, and all atoning rites are ultimately to be regarded as owing their

[1] Herodotus, II, 40. Fustel de Coulanges, *La Cité Antique,* f. i. "Les repas publics," pp. 179-183. See also, *Lectures on the History of Religions,* II: "Early Rome," by C. C. Martindale, pp. 11, 12.

efficacy to a communication of divine life to the worshippers, and to the establishment or confirmation of a living bond between them and their God." [1]

This theory, known under the name of *Totemism*, resting on ingenious combinations and clothing itself with the appearance of vast erudition, has a considerable following among Rationalists; and even some Catholics have thought it possible to adapt it, in a mitigated form, to our dogma of the sacrifice of the Cross and of the Mass.[2] For this alone it deserves to be briefly examined.

The system is based on the supposed genesis of religious life among the people. To begin with, each clan has its own religion. By clan is meant each tribal group in which everybody bears the same name, ordinarily that of an animal, and claims the same ancestor. The god was none other than this common parent or ancestor: a father he was rather than a king or master. His life spirit is believed to circulate in the blood of the *Totems*, that is, in that class of sacred animals which gave their name to the clan. But these animals are more than sacred; they are more than the symbol or intermediary of the god: in them there is truly something divine, for they possess a common blood with the god himself, and therefore with the entire membership of the clan. Whenever, through sin, discord arose between the

[1] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, pp. 400 and 439.

[2] See in the *Ecclesiastical Review*, from August, 1905, to April, 1906, the Essay of Right Rev. James Bellord and the discussion of his Banquet Theory.

god and his people, the *Totem* was at hand as a mediator. It sufficed to immolate him and drink his blood to the last drop, and the rupture was repaired by the renewal of physical relationship with the god. All expiation consisted in the infusion of new blood, pure and divine, bringing with it fresh energy. Such were the beginnings of sacrifice. With the progress of social life the god took on the character of a king and sacrifice became a present or gift. Then only arose the ideas of supporting the god and putting aside for him a share which he fed upon through fire. The more so as in the course of time, a repugnance was felt toward drinking blood; it was then, together with the fat, reserved for the god as the best and most vital portion. From this it was only a step to the holocaust; if sacrifice consists in a gift, if fire transmits this gift to the god, the most perfect sacrifice will be a victim wholly consumed. But evolution did not stop there. The anxiety to expiate more efficaciously, coupled with the desire to be assured that divine justice was satisfied, tended gradually toward the immolation of man himself. Later on, the people, ever seeking a victim more worthy of acceptance, more agreeable to the god, and more united to him in relationship, began to immolate those animals formerly reputed impure, such as swine, dogs, and reptiles. The use of these had been primitively forbidden to man precisely because they were supposed to be more possessed by the divinity. It was only natural, then, that they should become the true *piacula*, the most powerful intermediaries of expiation and divine initiation in

the Mysteries of the great historical religions.[1]

The above system is, indeed, constructed with care and is not without a certain grandeur. But it has for its foundation a postulate and not a proved principle. It may be summed up in the words of W. Patterson, himself an evolutionist: "The . . . Smith contribution to the evolutionary account of Semitic sacrifice is a brilliant piece of work which has profoundly influenced research in cognate fields. But the attractiveness of the ingenious combinations, supported as they are by vast and *recherché* erudition, necessitates a reminder of the extremely speculative and precarious character of many of the positions."[2] The very existence of *Totemism* among primitive peoples, and in particular, among the Semites, is not proved but is taken for granted by Smith; and the base itself being nothing more than a mere hypothesis, the entire argument loses that magnificence and strength which at first sight it seemed to have.

A priori there is nothing more unlikely than this belief in a consanguinity between the divine, the human, and the animal; and in reality, far from confirming such a hypothesis, the facts established by primitive history contradict it. Ordinarily, the blood of the victim was not drunk; it was regarded

[1] Cf. W. R. Smith, o. c., Lectures VI-XI and notes. Idem, article "Sacrifice" in *Encyc. Brit.,* 9th Ed.

[2] W. Patterson, Hasting's *Dictionary of the Bible,* 1905, article "Sacrifice," p. 332. Cf. also A. R. S. Kennedy, article "Sacrifice" in the (new) *Dictionary of the Bible* of Hastings, 1909, p. 817. Cf. *Encyc. Brit.,* 11th Ed., word "Sacrifice," p. 981.

as something to be specially reserved for the altar and the god. This law of abstention was imposed not only in Genesis and Leviticus (Gen. IX, 4, 5; Lev. XVII, 11); it was written also or at least clearly understood in all the Semitic rituals. Still more, the victim was never regarded as naturally divine; the sprinkling which it was made to undergo was rather an index of the fear that it might be impure and therefore unacceptable to God. Also, the deity, by virtue of the immolation, was besought to penetrate the victim, possess it, and make it divine; a fact which goes to show that this victim could not have been supposed to be already deified or related to the god. W. R. Smith exaggerates the supposed intrinsic sanctity of the victim to such an extent that one might justly reproach him with having borrowed from the dogma of the Eucharist his theory of a divine victim.

We may add here that the unfolding of this evolutionary theory, and also its final term, are no less imaginative than its beginning. A repast taken in common with the god tends to, and develops into, a holocaust where nothing is reserved for communion, then to human sacrifice, and last of all to the offering of impure animals: such a backward movement is neither likely nor historical.[1]

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We admit, also, that communion in ancient sacrifice was a sacred feast where man, being the guest of

[1] Cf. Lagrange, *Etudes sur les Religions Sémitiques*, pp. 110-118, 249-262.

God, partook of the deifying victim. But this victim had not of itself, physically, any deifying power; it obtained it by virtue of the offering and immolation. The rite of communion is only a consequence. It is the consummation of the sacrifice; it perfects its meaning and applies its fruit. In the spilling of blood on the altar there is already more than a symbol of the death of man; there is, it seems, a desire, an effort on man's part to unite himself with the god. The blood spilt represents his own, and this blood he strives to bring near his god; he spreads it on the altars, he uses it to anoint the sacred stones in which the deity is supposed to dwell. This symbolism of death and divine union which begins with the spilling of blood receives its consummation in communion. To a greater extent than the simple offerer, the communicant unites and identifies himself with the victim substituted to die in his place. Also, as a guest or intimate friend he eats "God's portion," a sacred food which creates, repairs, or reinforces the bonds of friendship or consanguinity existing between man and the divinity.

Let us insist on these two ideas.

First of all, through the special choice used in selecting a victim and through the suggestive rites used in offering, man already betokens his spiritual union with that victim in death. But this union seems to find its clearest, strongest expression when he communicates directly with the sacrifice: in eating the flesh from the altar, he shares in the very spirit of the altar. The word "communion" means

union, or becoming one, with the thing offered, in order to share in its state of immolation as though dead for God and possessed by Him.

But this spirit of death for God implies a movement, a desire, and an effort of man to unite himself with God. In communion, man and God, as members of the same family, partake of the same food. The fire which consumed the choicest parts of the victim disposed upon the altar was the means by which God took to Himself His part of the sacrifice. Fire, the purest, the most spiritual, the most powerful of all the elements, is by nature that which most fittingly represents the divinity. The food consumed on the altar was expressly considered as "the portion of the Lord": *in pabulum ignis et oblationis Domini;—pastum ignis dominici;—in holocaustum et odorem suavissimum Domino* (Lev. III, 11, 14; I, 13). Sometimes also, to show that He accepted the sacrifice with special pleasure, God caused a miraculous fire to descend from heaven or to burst forth from the altar; for example, to confirm Gedeon in his mission, to assure the repentant David of pardon, to sanction the first offerings made in the temple of Solomon, to confound the priests of Baal and reward the faith of Elias (Judg. VI, 21; I Par. XXI, 26; II Par. VII, 1-3; III Kings XVIII, 36). God was there at the altar, receiving, taking for Himself His share in the victim. To eat of the same victim was, therefore, after a manner, to sit at table with God.

In Rome and Athens this idea was carried so far

that each family repast was considered a religious act over which presided the fireside god: *Et mensæ adesse deos*, are the words of Ovid (Fast. VI, 300). Before the members of the family sat down to eat, a special part of the food was placed on the altar; before they began to drink, a libation of wine was poured forth. This was the portion reserved for the god. The fire consumed it: through the little flash of flame which rose up toward heaven the god was believed to have eaten with men.[1]

No doubt we are not entitled to see real communion in every sacred meal, even when it is partaken of near the altar and after a sacrifice. Only special research made in each particular case can fully determine the meaning of the banquets celebrated in honor of the gods. However, the fact that those who have offered the victim are officially admitted to eat a part of it, seems to imply incontestably the idea of communion. This idea appears even to-day in the banquets which follow the sacrifices offered by primitive races.[2]

This repast, taken in common with the god, brought as its result peace and union. It bred or preserved in the communicants a kind of superior or divine life: for food taken in common supposes relationship, or, in some manner, creates it. This the more especially, since the victim, now become through the offering and immolation a sacred thing belonging to the god, had acquired a certain sanctifying

[1] Fustel de Coulanges, o. c., p. 24.

[2] Cf. *Lectures on the History of Religions*, V. "The Religion of Primitive Races," by Bishop Le Roy, p. 13.

property, a mysterious power of divine union. When consulted concerning the eating of food which had been offered to idols, St. Paul forbids the Corinthians to assist at religious feasts where these foods were served officially (I Cor. VIII, 7-10). He bases his prohibition on the principle of the intimate union, one might even call it physical, created between the divinity and the communicant (I Cor. X, 14-21). His argument may be summarized as follows: My beloved, fly these idolatrous feasts, for you have communicated with the Chalice and with the Bread of Christ. Each sacrificial repast unites and incorporates the communicant with the divinity, true or false, to whom the victim is offered. The food offered to idols has been immolated to demons, not to God. You cannot, then, eat of it without sitting at the demons' table and uniting yourselves with them; and this after you have been incorporated with Christ![1]

Thus, applied to Christian and Jew as well as to the pagans of his time, we find in St. Paul the old Greek, Semitic, and universal idea of communion as a principle of divine union and life. A sentence from the text of the great Apostle reminds us that this bond which unites the communicants to God, also links them together as members of the same family: "For we, being many, are one bread, one body, all that partake of one bread" (I Cor. X, 17.) To par-

[1] Cf. Batiffol, *L'Eucharistie*, 5th Ed., 1913, pp. 92-98. Cf. Prat, *Théologie de S. Paul*, I, 1908, pp. 159-161. Cf. also, Hasting's *Dictionary of the Bible*, 1909, word "Sacrifice," p. 817: "By this sharing, as the guests of God, the common meal of which the worshipped and the worshippers partook within the Sanctuary, the latter renewed the bond which united them to their covenant God."

take of the same sacred food creates a bond between soul and soul stronger than the natural bond of blood; or, rather, the social bond itself was religious. The members of the family, of the *gens (gentilitium)*, of the nation of old, were distinguished from the stranger and remained intimately united among themselves, only because, having assisted at the same sacrifice, they sat together at the same sacred feast. Communion was the banquet of the covenant.

One last striking fact: the older pagan society grew, the more it believed in the supernatural and social virtue of communion. Especially is this exemplified about the third century of our era when, though we see the pagan world becoming more and more corrupt, we behold it at the same time becoming more and more tormented with the idea of expiation and divine life. The mystical rites of the Orient and the Mysteries of Greece amalgamate in a vast religious syncretism which spreads everywhere. Occasionally also comes the belief in, or the dream of, a victim truly divine and truly deifying. The mystical dramas of Osiris and Adonis celebrate the suffering and the immolation of a god who triumphs over death. The participators in the orgies of Bacchus feast on the flesh of bulls into which the god is supposed to have entered.[1]

[1] Cf. W. R. Smith, o. c., pp. 410-412. Clement of Alex, *Cohortatio ad Gentes*, II. Theophrastes, *In Porphyrium, de Abstinentia*, II, 29. Appuleius, *Metamorph.* XI, analyzed in *Lectures on the History of Religions*, II: "Imperial Rome," pp. 11, 12. Cf. chiefly, Franz Cumont, *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism*, Chicago, 1911, especially on the "Taurobolium and Communion," Chap. III, Sect. 3; on the "Mysteries," Chap. III, Sect. 2; Chap. IV, Sect. 1; Chap. V, Sect. 3; Chap. VI, Sect. 2.

Beneath these dreams and practices, mixed with idolatry, superstition and sensuality, was hidden the true, pure, and high idea of a communion which logically and efficaciously consummates the sacrifice. By the offering of the victim which it substituted for itself, the human race did its very best to raise itself toward God in adoration and expiation. In return, God, through communion, came down to pardon and sanctify. The latreutic and expiatory sacrifice ended naturally in a sacrament of divine life. Dead with the victim, by this same victim is man supernaturally brought to life. And when mankind, turning dreams into reality, will have found and immolated a Victim truly divine, then its sacrifice will be consummated in a truly deifying Communion.

CHAPTER V.

The Minister of the Sacrifice.

Everywhere in connection with the ancient altar appears the priest, a man officially chosen, and consecrated in some manner to offer sacrifice to God in the name of the religious society.

I.

In the ancient liturgies, individual sacrifice, while allowed, occupied only a secondary place. Before aught else, sacrifice was an act of social worship, performed in the name of the family, tribe, or city, and consequently, should be offered by a minister qualified to represent the religious society before God. That minister was the priest.

In the beginning it seems that the natural head of the family or tribe was also the priest. With the development of social organization there was a tendency to separate the temporal and spiritual powers. Either through the supernatural intervention of God or by virtue of a delegation from the king or from the people, we find sacerdotal bodies created everywhere, the members of which were placed in charge of "things divine" and in particular of sacrifice. Even where kings continue to retain the sacred dignity and perform its functions, colleges of priests were established to aid them or supply their place. Wherever, then, we see an altar

raised in ancient times, there also we find the priest, the man officially delegated before God to offer the sacrifice in the name of all. So true is this that in every great religion of antiquity may be verified the definition which the Epistle to the Hebrews applies to the Jewish pontiff alone. "Every high-priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Heb. V, 1).

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In the Bible narrative we find filling the rôle of sacrificers at the outset only those who were the heads or were destined to become the heads of families: Cain and Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. None of these Patriarchs, it is true, is called a priest; but, excepting Cain, whose sacrifice was in a manner officially rejected, did they not have as much right to this title as Melchisedech, King of Salem, who was but the head of one of the many Cananæan tribes? Particular symbolic reasons there were, of course, why Melchisedech should be singled out to be expressly declared a priest of the Most High. For the great ancestors of the Hebrews no such special reasons existed. But priests of the Lord they were nevertheless; for they offered holocausts as heads of a religious group, thereby meriting the blessings which multiplied their race.

On the eve of setting out for Egypt, Jacob offers a sacrifice; and this was the last act of the patriarchal priesthood clearly mentioned by the Bible (Gen. XLVI, 1). From certain indications it is

thought that during the centuries of exile and half-servitude a sacerdotal body was organized outside the heads of families. The Book of Exodus distinguishes between the people, and the priests who "come to the Lord"; there also are mentioned some young men sent by Moses to immolate and offer the victims whose blood was to seal the Covenant (Exod. XIX, 22-24; XXIV, 5).[1]

This post-patriarchal priesthood, if it existed at all, was, at most, transitory. With the advent of the Law, a new hierarchy was set over Israel's worship. The supernatural intervention which regulated the offering of the sacrifice must also, quite naturally, extend to the priesthood. Yaveh chooses the tribe of Levi for the exclusive service of the altar. Every member of this tribe must have a share in the sacred functions and live by the altar (Num. XVII, 20-32); but not all were priests. The priesthood was reserved for the family of Aaron; and only the head of this family was called simply "the Priest." Later, the terms "Pontiff," "High-Priest," were used (Exod. XXVIII, XXIX; Lev. VIII). The inferior Levites, the great majority of the tribe, were not allowed to offer sacrifice; they assisted the priest at the altar and had, besides, a multitude of offices to perform regarding the protection, the care, and the transportation of the Tabernacle and of the various objects necessary for worship (Num. IV, 1-19).

In spite of the divine institution of this sacerdotal caste, with privileges so exclusive, we notice in the

[1] On this very problematic priesthood, cf. Hummelauer, S. J., *Comment. in Exod. et Lev.*, pp. 3-7.

case of certain kings the survival of their primitive religious rights. God, it is true, did not approve of every kingly intervention in the exercise of worship. Saul, to put a stop to the disbanding of his army, which had begun to desert in presence of the enemy, took upon himself to offer a holocaust, after having waited in vain for seven days the arrival of Samuel: and God withdrew the divine favor from him in punishment for this sacrilegious attempt (I Kings XIII, 8-14). David's sacrifice, on the contrary, was acceptable to the Lord. After his sin of pride he offered with his own hands holocausts and peace-offerings: and that God was pleased is evidenced by His sending on the altar a heavenly fire (I Par. XXI, 26-30).

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Among the other Semites, exclusive of the Jewish nation, as also among the Persians, the East Indians, and the Egyptians, we find in most remote times a priesthood distinct from the civil power.[1]

It is a privileged caste almost everywhere, a body aristocratic, rich, and powerful. In ancient India the Brahmans, distinguished into sacrificing, singing, and praying priests, composed the superior caste. In Babylon the organization of the hierarchy was, in the time of Abraham, already very complex. There were two kinds of priests: the *exorcist* who performed certain rites of expiation and conjured with charms learned from the gods; and the *haruspex* or *diviner*, or *seer*, who was the true sacrificing priest.

[1] Cf. *Cath. Encyc.*, word "Priesthood," pp. 409-410.

The first place in this hierarchy was occupied by a high priest.

Occasionally we find in these ancient priesthoods a connecting link with royalty. Thus, the Egyptian priests were the hereditary counsellors of the king; the highest among them in dignity holding the rank of officers of the crown (Diodorus, 1, 73). Chaldean history, going back to Hammurabi, shows us the kings in direct communication with the gods, who inspired their laws. But these same kings submit themselves to the priests in things spiritual and have need of recourse to the exorcist to be purified by the blood of the victims. Legend, coming to us from the mists beyond the region of history, would place the power of royalty above all priesthood. The heavenly secrets transmitted from father to son among the priestly caste, were primitively revealed by King Eumeduranki, who himself received from Chamach, the Lord of Heaven, the gift to see into mysteries "by reading the tablet of the gods."

Nowhere did the two powers remain united as in the Græco-Roman world. For a long time they were even blended together. The father, as the priest of the domestic altar, lights and maintains the sacred fire. He alone can slaughter the victims and pronounce the sacred formulas. When several families are united in a phratry or ward, the association has its altar, and its head is then the priest. Homer and Vergil present to our view kings occupied unceasingly with sacred ceremonies. The founder of Roman power and splendor is pictured in Vergil's poem as a pontiff, majestic, calm, and pious, *Pius*

Æneas. The Colleges of Priests in Rome were instituted by the kings themselves as "an emanation from their own supreme power." Romulus founds the *Arval Brothers* and appoints them to offer sacrifices to the goddess of the fields. Numa increases the number of *Augurs*, creates the College of the *Flamens* to take the place of kings absent from Rome, and the College of the *Salii* to guard the Ancile or Sacred Shield of Mars; later, one of the Tarquins establishes the *Quindecimvirs* for the care or inspection of the Sibylline books. After the disappearance of the kings, there exists in Rome as in Greece a magistrate, called *Rex Sacrorum*, who was in charge of public worship. Also, the Consuls, the Censors, and other public officials attribute to themselves priestly powers. Lastly, the Cæsars, as heirs of the ancient kings, take the title of Pontiff and are elected by right as heads of all the Colleges of Priests.[1]

II.

Everywhere, then, a priesthood exists, and everywhere it has the same essential traits.

The priest is a man officially chosen, and in some manner consecrated, to offer sacrifice in the name of the religious society. This election and consecration are traits not fully evolved until we reach the Jewish priesthood. It is possible, however, to recognize in other religions some features, more or less

[1] Cf. Lagrange, *Etudes sur les Religions Sémitiques*, pp. 217-242. Fustel de Coulanges, o. c., pp. 94-98, pp. 202-205, etc. *Encyc. Brit.*, 11th Ed., word "Priest," pp. 318, 319; words "Arval Brothers." Murray, *Manual of Mythology*, 1898, p. 85.

effaced and broken, of this general aspect of the priestly state.

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Everywhere in pagan antiquity the priest appears to be in some way specially chosen to represent the religious society.

Appointed either by right of birth, by election, or by royal commission, the priest is the object of choice or delegation. He is invested with an official mission as a religious representative before God: *Pro hominibus constituitur in iis quæ sunt ad Deum.*

Everywhere also, in pagan antiquity, the priest appears before us as one consecrated, as "the man of God."

From the single fact that he is officially constituted to represent the people in the religious ministry, *in iis quæ sunt ad Deum*, the priest, be he the head of the tribe, the king, or a member of a chosen caste, is presented to our view clothed with a character and dignity apart. He is distinguished and separated from other men, and is united particularly with God. Being "the man of God," he is in some manner consecrated; for, originally, consecration or sanctification signified union with the divinity. But, as a rule, in the organized priesthoods this constitution or dedication of the priest is accomplished by rites expressly symbolizing purification and consecration. More still, it entails many privations or practices of asceticism the evident object of which is to detach man from things terrestrial

in order to unite him more intimately with God.

The Celtic Druids were diviners, judges, teachers, physicians; but they were also priests, and the sacrifice, to be acceptable to the gods, had to be presided over by one of them. All have heard or read of the half-monastic novitiate, of the long white robes, and of the relative celibacy of this famous caste. The initiation of the Egyptian priest took place only after long preparatory studies; it implied many lustrations and frequent fasts, during which the use of wine was totally forbidden (Diodorus, I, 73; Herodotus, II, 37, 38). The sacred fire on the public hearth of the city was tended by the Vestal Virgins. *Virgines Vestales custodiunt ignem foci publici sempiternum*, said the old laws. Those virgins formed a true sacerdotal body: *sanctissimum sacerdotium* as they were called by Cicero (*Pro Domo*, 53). Horace himself bows respectfully before the "holy virgins" (Odes, Lib. I, 2, 27). The Vestal permitting the sacred flame of the altar to die out was condemned to be flogged. But for the crime of forfeiting her chastity she was conveyed to the *Campus Sceleratus*, and there placed in a subterranean chamber provided with a bed, a lighted lamp, and some bread and water. The chamber was then closed upon her, the earth thrown over it, and the unfortunate priestess left to die a most agonizing death. Meanwhile the whole city was sorrowful and sacrifices were offered to avert public calamity. The Babylonian priests must spring from the chosen caste, be well proportioned, of good appearance and free from physical blemish. Their necessary initia-

tion consisted in a series of lustrations and sacrifices. Outside of this initial ceremony, they were bound, before each solemn sacrifice, to perform certain ablutions and to anoint their bodies with sweet scented oil. Their very garb must be sanctified.[1]

These purifications, however, were only exterior and legal: the soul was not reached. All these attempts at asceticism and virginity were very relative. The multiplication of lustrations, the outward show of abstinence could be joined with practices the most immoral. It is a matter of history that there was nothing more sensual in all antiquity than the Phœnician worship, which at the same time imposed on its priests a rigorous asceticism, bloody scourgings, and painful mutilations during the progress of the Sacred Processions (Appuleius, *Metam.*, 8).[2] However, we have here a sign at least. Just in proportion as a man was raised in the hierarchy, brought nearer to the altar and thought to be more united to God, greater privations were imposed on him and an attempt was made to separate him from things profane. It would seem as if the people, by calling for purity on the part of the priest, saw in this virtue a necessary condition to his consecration to God and setting apart for things divine.

[1] On the "Druids," cf. *Lectures on the History of Religions*, I: "Celtic Religion," by J. MacNeill, pp. 17-27. Cf. Jos. Dunn, article "Druidism," in *Cath. Encyc.* On the "Vestals," cf. *Encyc. Brit.*, 11th Ed., word "Vesta." Murray, *Manual of Mythology*, pp. 78-81. On the "Chaldean Priest," cf. Lagrange, *Etudes sur les Religions Sémitiques*, pp. 217-242. Cf. Dhorme, *La Religion Assyro-Babylonienne*, 9e Leç.

[2] Franz Cumont, *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism*, Chap. III, Sect. 1 and 2; Chap. V, Sect. 2. *Lectures on the History of Religions*, I: "Religion of Ancient Syria," pp. 22-24.

Everywhere in pagan antiquity the priest appears before us as above all else the minister of sacrifice.

Other powers he has, but all are derived from the altar. The intermediary of divine favors he is only inasmuch as he has been the intermediary of human prayer through the offering of the victim. Even among the Phœnicians, where divination holds so high a place, where each great temple is the seat of the oracles, where the priests live in a perpetual fever of prophecy, these priests are first and foremost the ministers of sacrifice. In like manner the principal Babylonian priests are called specifically *soothsayers, diviners, seers,* but their visions and their oracles are obtained only through sacrifice, and sometimes through a long series of sacrifices: "Without gift or offering a son of the soothsayers does not approach the Place of Judgment . . .; without offerings the gods will reveal to him no mysteries." Thus runs the text of the ancient ritual. When we come to the Egyptian priests, we find them, indeed, intervening in temporal affairs; they are judges, legislators, royal counsellors; they are, moreover, theologians, astrologers and seers: but their primary and principal office, that from which all their privileges and prestige spring, is none other than to offer sacrifice (Herodotus, II, 37-40). The same holds true for Greece and Rome. There the revelation of divine secrets was expected from the priests only because at the altar they came near to the god and won his favor. It was only in the entrails of the victim offered to the gods that they could read great future events.

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These traits, scattered and vague, are grouped together and precisely determined by God Himself in the priests supernaturally chosen and consecrated for His sacrifice.

The Levites were not truly priests; but they came near the altar and served in the Tabernacle. That this was enough to call for a divine choice and a certain purifying consecration is evident from the words of Yaveh to Moses: "Take the Levites out of the midst of the children of Israel, and thou shalt purify them . . .; and shalt separate them from the midst of the children of Israel to be mine, and afterward they shall enter into the tabernacle of the covenant to serve me" (Num. VIII, 6, 14, 15, etc.). Clearly also is this same fact shown by Moses when, in the name of Yaveh, he reproaches with their sacrilegious ambitions Core, Dathan, and Abiron, because they had dared enter into dispute with the family of Aaron concerning the priesthood: "Hear ye sons of Levi: is it a small thing unto you that the God of Israel hath separated you from all the people and joined you to himself, that you should serve him in the service of the tabernacle?" (Num. XVI, 8, 9).

The choosing and the consecration of Aaron as high priest, and of his sons as priests, was the occasion of the most solemn ceremony of the Mosaic worship.

The divine choice for the priesthood has the special name of "vocation" or "calling" in the language of Catholic Christians. This word is applied by the New Testament to the high priest Aaron. "Neither doth any man take the honor to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was" (Heb. V, 4). This "call" of Aaron took place when God said to Moses: "Take unto thee also Aaron thy brother with his sons from the children of Israel, that they may minister to me in the priest's office" (Exod. XXVIII, 1).

For the consecration of those called, Yaveh prescribes the ceremonial. And what a profusion of rites! Sacred baths; investiture; anointing; a triple sacrifice—a sin offering, a holocaust, and a peace-offering; sprinkling with blood, etc. (Exod. XXIX, 1-37; Lev. VIII, 1-36). And all this symbolism had as its primary aim the purification of those elected to the altar. Before admitting them to initiation, God exacted, as a preliminary condition, that the candidates should be exempt from all stain or physical defect, that they should be sound and beautiful in body (Lev. XXI, 17-23). When fully initiated, the priests were obliged by their consecration to observe relative continence, to perform manifold ablutions, to spend their life in the practice of certain precautions and in bearing many separations, lest they might profane the name and worship of the Lord. They shall not join in mourning for the dead except for the nearest relatives; they must not marry one who has been put away from her husband, nor any one of doubtful reputation; the high priest may marry only a virgin. When about to enter the

Sanctuary they must abstain from wine. God has sanctified them; they are consecrated to Yaveh, and must therefore be pure (Lev. XXI, 1-15; XXII, 1-7; Exod. XXX, 18-21).[1]

Finally, it was for the offering of sacrifice that the priests were so specially chosen and consecrated. "For they offer the burnt-offering of the Lord, and the bread of their God, and therefore they shall be holy" (Lev. XXI, 6). The right to offer sacrifice is reserved exclusively to the priests. The Levites, and even men of the other tribes, may immolate the victim, for this is material work; but the priest alone may collect the blood and pour it on the altar, put aside the part of the victim reserved for God, and light the fire to consume it, for this is the formal sacrifice (Lev. I, 5-17; II, 2; III, 2-16). And furthermore, for the task of offering the victim of the Great Annual Expiation and carrying the blood beyond the veil into the Holy of Holies, the high priest alone is sufficiently pure, sufficiently consecrated (Lev. XVI). But were the high priest bold enough to enter the Sanctuary without the victimal blood, his prayer of expiation would be not only inefficacious, but also sacrilegious. All the sacerdotal power to purify, to bless, to transmit the oracles of Yaveh comes from the altar. The priest sanctifies only because he is the minister of the sacrifice (Exod. XXIX, 38-46; Lev. IX, 22, 23; Lev. XVI).

[1] Cf. Hummelauer, *Commentar. in Exod. et Levit.*

CHAPTER VI.

The Cross and the Ancient Altar.

In the Jewish sacrifice, the light of faith reveals to us a divinely ordained figure of the sacrifice of the Cross. But an obscure presage, an unconscious presentiment of the Cross may perhaps be found even at the foundation of Gentile sacrifice.

I.

All Christians admit that the Levitic sacrifice was the type, the figure of the sacrifice of the Cross. In the intention of God, who instituted them, the Israelitic rites did more than express the mere manner according to which worship was to be practiced by the Chosen People: they prefigured the future perfect sacrifice of adoration and expiation. But this was not all. In maintaining the consciousness of sin, joined to a faith and hope of pardon through a redemption yet to come, these rites were, in the intention of God, an occasion, a means, by which souls might share beforehand in the saving fruits of the Cross.

"The end of the law is Christ" (Rom. X, 4). And the end of all the sacrifices carried on under the Law is the sacrifice of Christ. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians (X, 1-11), St. Paul, after having traced an epitome of the life of Israel, with its virtues and

faults, concludes: "Now all these things happened to them in figure." But if the small incidents of life in the desert were a figure, "a prophecy in action," of the New Testament, much more, then, was that most supernatural of all Jewish institutions, sacrifice, ordained for Jesus and His Cross. The Epistle to the Hebrews does not allow us to doubt, much less to deny, this. The entire argument of this epistle rests, as we shall see, on the typical character of the ancient liturgy in relation to the perfect sacrifice offered by the eternal High Priest on the Cross.

Appeal must be made to this typical and relative character if we wish to explain the contrast, the disproportion, existing between the letter and the spirit of the Jewish ritual.

The words of God, lofty and emphatic, richly expressive, lead us to expect an imposing worship, ideally perfect: the reality is meager and withal material. This Tabernacle, proclaimed to be the dwelling of Yaveh in the camp of Israel, is nothing but a tent a little more ornamented and strongly built than others of its kind. Here the Most High, always invisible and holding Himself aloof like an Eastern potentate, deigns to receive the adorations of His people. Those priests, called "the Saints of God," are consecrated only externally; internally they may remain grossly human. That blood, so jealously reserved to be sprinkled for the worship of Yaveh or poured forth in expiation for sin, is in itself without value or virtue. And yet, God Him-

self has instituted this ceremonial; He has approved it and imposed it with all His authority. Eternal and most high as He is and Spirit most pure, He condescends to be pleased with these inadequate sacrifices. But surely such a God could never sanction these ceremonies as definitively befitting Him. What He sees, what He approves with pleasure, is the spiritual wrapped in the material, the perfect reality hidden beneath the imperfect type, the Cross of Jesus looming dimly on the altar of Aaron.[1]

Appeal must be made to this typical and relative character of Jewish sacrifice if we wish to reconcile the apparent contradictions which seem to have divided and tortured souls in the halcyon days of Israel's piety.

On the one hand, the least details of the liturgy were imposed in the name of Yaveh; they must be scrupulously observed; a slight mistake, like the placing of unconsecrated coals in the censor, was punished by death (Lev. X, 1-3). So far was this carried, that the union of the people with the Lord, the blessings of the earth and the dew of heaven, peace or victory over enemies—all depended on the minute observance of liturgic ceremonies. On the other hand, men the most noble and religious, Prophets and Psalmists, looked with eyes of disfavor on bloody oblations. Some of these condemnations, indeed, affected only the sacrileges of unworthy priests or the gross and superstitious opinions of the

[1] Cf. Cave, *The Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice and Atonement*, pp. 162-176.

people. But, occasionally, the institution itself, the sacrifice seemed to be attacked and censured, and this in the direct words of God: "To what purpose do you offer me the multitude of your victims, saith the Lord? I am full; I desire not holocausts of rams . . . and blood of calves, and lambs. . . . Offer sacrifice no more in vain: incense is an abomination to me" (Is. I, 11-13). "For I spoke not to your fathers, and I commanded them not, in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning the matter of burnt-offerings and sacrifices. But this thing I commanded them saying: Hearken to my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people" (Jer. VII, 22, 23; cf. Os. VI, 6; Ps. XXXIX, 7-9; Ps. L, 18, 19).

Certain of the Fathers,—St. Justin, Tertullian, and St. Basil,—quoted by Thomassin,[1] seemed to take this language of the Prophets literally, and to deny that bloody sacrifice was ever, properly speaking, either instituted or approved by God. The practice existing before the time of Moses—they seem to hold—had been only tolerated as a concession to gross instincts, or as an outlet to the idolatrous tendencies of the people.

But it is hard to see how the intervention of Yaveh in these sacrifices could be called a mere act of toleration. Moreover, the national and religious life of a people cannot be built on a worship worthy only of being tolerated as a lesser evil.

More plausible is the interpretation suggested by the Prophets themselves in their criticism of the

[1] *De Incar. Verbi,* X, Chap. 3, 4.

established worship. Far from concluding that the priesthood and the sacrifice which they attack should be suppressed, they foretell its transformation and eternal duration. According to Jeremias, the Levites and the priests will be multiplied as the stars of heaven to burn incense and offer holocausts every day (XXXIII, 17, 18). Sophonias announces that Yaveh has prepared unto Himself a victim and has sanctified His elect (I, 7). Malachias speaks of a sacrifice of incense and of a pure offering which Yaveh will receive, in every place, among all nations, from the hands of His regenerated Levites (I, 10, 11; III, 3). Plainly, then, the Prophets do not attack sacrifice in principle. But they recognize the insufficiency of the oblations of their times; and this inadequacy they denounced the more strongly because the people were inclined to hypnotize themselves, as it were, seeing only the present and attaching themselves to the letter of the rite with a narrow and proud superstition, the forerunner of future pharisaism. Above all, in those days of liturgical revival, it was good, and even necessary, to declare boldly that the Law, the Tabernacle, the Temple, the Altar, were not the last word in worship. The Prophets wished to make the people feel, as they felt it themselves, the utter imperfection of legalism, and thus to turn their eyes toward the religion to come. This is why they insisted so vigorously on the relative character of the worship of their time: it is a worship not instituted as an end in itself, but only as a step to something better; it is of value only to those who look beyond it. Those who attach them-

selves superstitiously to this provisional state pervert the divine institution; they offer, so to say, a sacrifice entirely different from that which God demands and approves. The Prophets preach the necessity of uniting the spirit with the letter, and of vivifying the acts of material worship by means of interior religion. They inculcate some vague hope of a better priesthood and a more worthy sacrifice, the priesthood of the perfect religion, the sacrifice of pure souls (Ps. L, 18, 19).

This Jewish faith, even in the most far-sighted Prophets, did not completely penetrate the mystery of future sacrifice. It was content with the hope of more abundant mercy soon to come, with the renewal of a more profoundly spiritualized Levitic worship, with the universal triumph of the religion of Yaveh. But, until the full light had burst upon the earth, this faith sufficed for salvation: "by faith (they) obtained promises" (Heb. XI, 33). Unfortunately, when the light came, brilliantly revealing the fulfilment of all the promises contained in the Old Testament as well as their full typical sense, many refused to see. The spiritual reality was too far beyond the material type. Their carnal sense, their pharisaism, stuck obstinately to the Law and the symbols: but the symbols were now empty (Gal. IV, 9). The worship, which for their fathers was the veil of the mysteries of life, becomes for them the pall of blindness and death. Their fathers without seeing Christ possessed Him, hidden though He was in the obscurity of symbols; they, the children, lost the Messiah by refusing to recognize Him and by

denying Him when He came forth into the full light of day (II Cor. III, 13, 17).

For us, at least, the coming of Jesus should remove the veil and explain the past. To use the words of Pascal, Jesus gives us the "key" to the Old Testament, for "in Him all dissonances are brought into harmony." [1] The same idea is expressed by Bossuet: "Behold the pavement of the Temple, the vestments of the priests, behold the altar and the Sanctuary running with sacrificial blood, in which the People of Israel have been washed so many times. How dark all this, if faith does not show the blood of the Lamb shed for the remission of our crimes, the blood of the New Testament. . . . If we have not Christ in mind, all the prophetical writings lose their savor; they are apparently full of folly, at least in part. Let us but recognize the Savior in them and the light bursts forth, everything is reasonable, all is harmonious." [2]

II.

Can we go further and see Jesus in the sacrifices practised by the Gentiles?

At first sight, piety revolts at the thought of seeking Christ in the midst of pagan horrors. We know, or rather we shall never fully know, because of its great extent, all that men, prompted by passion, or led on perhaps by the powers of darkness, have devised of obscenity and murder to defile the

[1] Pascal, *Thoughts,* English translation, C. Kegan Paul, New York, 1899; "The Jewish Law Figurative," pp. 122-138, especially p. 130.

[2] Bossuet, *Serm. pour le 2e Dim. après l'Epiph.* (Vivès, 2e Ed., VIII, 402 . . .).

altar. There is not an ancient people known to us, outside the Jews, on whose sacrifices, at one time or another, the shadow of vice has not fallen. The Phœnician worship with its frightful Baals; Greek Mysteries with their sacred prostitution; the deification of the Cæsars, of a Nero, of a Caligula: what pages of filth and blood open to our view when we examine the religious history of the human race! Even in the days of Abraham the religion of the Chaldeans lived on immoral legends, and shielded in its temples crimes against nature. The demons are at times the object, if not the very inspiration, of these sacrilegious religions: "The things which the heathens sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God" (I Cor. X, 20).[1]

And yet, no one would dare assert that every immolation, every communion, made outside of Israel, was nothing but superstition, orgy, or sacrilege. Even among the Greeks, so thoroughly idolatrous and sensual, we think we can see a passing gleam, and sometimes more than a gleam, of true religion. In the great tragedies of Æschylus and Sophocles, the themes of which were so nearly religious, can we not perceive beneath the formulas of invocation the attitude and the accent of a soul in adoration? And, indeed why should the religious sentiment be less enduring, less long-lived than other noble sentiments

[1] On the immorality of the old religions: For the "Chaldeans," cf. Lagrange, *Etudes sur les Religions Sémitiques*, pp. 220, 221, 241, 242, and especially Chap. X: "Mythes Babyloniens;" for the "Phœnicians," cf. Appuleius, *Metam.* VI, VII, VIII. Cf. Franz Cumont, *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism*, Chap. III, IV, V, VI; for "Greece and Rome," cf. Fouard, *St. Peter*, New York, 1893, Chap. XV and XVI.

which survived in the bosom of darkness and corruption? God, who searches the heart to discover there the least disfiguring stain, looks also for the smallest germ of good-will, smothered though it may be under unconscious error. He must, then, have occasionally discerned in these perverted purifications and communions something like a desire and an effort toward homage, expiation, and true sanctity; a prayer for a perfect victim, or the witness of a soul naturally Christian.

A substantial resemblance can be seen between all the ancient sacrifices. Striking analogies are found between the Mosaic and Chaldean rituals. The common idea of a substituted victim which is offered and immolated in place of man, by way of adoration and expiation, is found in all liturgies. And this idea, despite the perversion of rite with which it is carried out, always preserves some majestic traits: there is always the adoration of the divinity, a certain brotherhood through worship, a mysterious sense of guilt, a mystic communion with the god and a new life in him. So striking have these traits appeared to some Christian apologists that they have attempted to discover therein vestiges of a primitive tradition, the remains of a supernatural worship inspired by God from the very beginning in view of Christ and Redemption. That the oldest liturgies were connected with a primitive revelation is plausible enough. It is surely the most satisfactory explanation of certain beliefs or mysterious practices common to all religions, such as the expiatory virtue attributed to blood, the nourishing and sanctifying

properties of communion, etc.[1] But if these universal beliefs and practices cannot with absolute certainty be traced directly to God, it is at least beyond doubt that they cannot be explained without appealing to all that is highest and most religious in the human soul. And the noble instincts, the deep aspirations toward prayer and purity, speak also of some divine influence guiding mankind toward the true Victim, Jesus Himself. From this it follows that in the very beginning, after the Fall, God, in the act of revealing or inspiring the ceremonial of sacrifice, at the same time turned the religious instincts of mankind toward the Redeemer. In the following ages, either by preserving fragments and a remembrance of the primitive ritual, or by creating spontaneously the symbols of its religious worship, humanity did not completely lose this first impulse and direction toward the altar of Christ.

Again, how can we explain the phenomenon that in proportion to the degree in which corruption attacked the various religions, the instinct of expiation became more tormenting? Myth and Mystery popularize the idea of a redemption which will be obtained through the merits of a mediator pure and superhuman, or through the death of a victim innocent and divine. The names of these mediators and victims we know: Zoroaster of the Persians, sent by Ormuzd to combat Ahriman; the Indian Buddha, choosing the lot of suffering to deliver thousands of

[1] Cf. A. Lemonnyer, O. P., *La révélation primitive et les données actuelles de la science d'après l'ouvrage allemand du Rev. P. G. Schmidt, directeur de l'Anthropos,* Paris, 1914, Chap. IV.

beings from a migratory existence and conduct them to Nirvana; the Egyptian Osiris, suffering, dying, and rising to life again.[1] Oppressed by a strange feeling of suffering, moral and physical, humanity dreamed more and more of a pure and heavenly liberator, triumphant over evil through death. In the drama of Æschylus, Hermes says to Prometheus: "Neither look for any respite from this agony unless some God shall appear as a voluntary successor to thy toils." In spite of the obscurity and contradictions of this myth, we may see in Prometheus the type of the human race, cursed in its first parents and living far from God, its soul corroded with the shame of sin and tormented with the fear of merited vengeance. But deep in the recesses of the heart, a "blind hope," the instinct of life or the echo of an ancient promise, speaks of expiation and deliverance. These are to be realized through the blood of a heaven-sent Victim, who will be pure and pleasing to God. During the long years of waiting, humanity must have some substituted victim to allay its fear of the divinity; it immolates animals, washes itself in their blood, and eats their flesh. In these imperfect victims man finds neither the sought-for peace nor the desired cessation of suffering; through them, however, his anguish is allayed, for they keep alive in his heart the instinctive hope of an effica-

[1] Cf. De Broglie, *Problèmes et conclusions de l'histoire des religions*, Paris, 1897, pp. 166, 168; pp. 183, 184, etc. Cf. Lagrange, word "Iran" in *Dictionnaire Apologétique de la foi catholique*, 1914, col. 1115-1128. Cf. Franz Cumont, o. c., Chap. IV, Sect. 3. Cf. *Lectures on the History of Religions:* "Religion of Egypt," "Osiris," I, 15-17; 29-30; "Mysteries of Ancient Greece," II, 21-24; "Religion of Mithra," II, 16-32.

cious substitution, which will save him some day.

It is, therefore, from the indestructibly religious idea which it contained that we can call the sacrifice of the Gentiles a presage of the unique and infinite Sacrifice. And thus understood, it has a real meaning, a sort of efficacy. Above the ancient altar hovers the invisible Cross, which, visible now for us, explains the religious history of the past.

CHAPTER VII.

Occisus a Constitutione Mundi.

Conclusion of the First Part.

"Whence comes the shedding of so much blood in the ancient ceremonies, if not to represent the blood of Jesus? Why are the people delivered by the blood of the Lamb? Why is the Covenant signed and ratified with blood? . . . Why, unless it be to make us understand that there is neither deliverance, expiation, nor salvation, except through the blood of the stainless Lamb, 'slain from the beginning of the world' (Apoc. XIII, 8); for from the beginning of the world His death is represented by a multitude of bloody sacrifices, *O Christum in novis veterem.*" [1]

I.

In the very beginning, Abel the just is slain and becomes the first victim of death and sacrifice. When in Bouguereau's painting called "The First Sorrow," we see, resting on the knees and enclosed by the arms of Eve, the body of Abel, with drooping and almost rigid members, with sagging head and sightless eyes, we involuntarily think of the *Pieta.* The background also of this portrayal of the common lot of man has a symbolic meaning. There, barely visible, is a smoking altar to bring home to us that the form reposing

[1] Bossuet, *Fragment de sermon pour le deuxième dimanche après l'Epiphanie* (Vivès, VIII, 410).

in a mother's arms, the first victim of death, is also a victim of the altar. It tells us clearly that the end of every human being should have the character of expiation and sacrifice. Clearer still does this first infliction of death point to the immolation of Christ. Abel died because he had offered up an agreeable sacrifice. Inspired by faith, he had presented to God victims more acceptable than those offered by his brother, Cain. To acknowledge his piety, the Lord visibly approved his sacrifice and rejected that of his brother (Gen. IV, 4, 5). Happy priest, indeed, who drew down on earth the first favorable look of God since Satan's successful wiles had turned the face of the Almighty from His creature, man! Alas! with his life he paid for the honor of divine favors. But this very death constituted for him a new glory; it is through it that he became the type of the priestly Victim, who must offer the infinitely agreeable sacrifice, dying to destroy the curse of sin. Engendered of sin, death to prove its power over the entire human race seizes the youngest, the purest, prematurely, by a new and terrible crime. It takes him, so to speak, as he descends from the altar, as if to show that sacrifice, even the most acceptable to God, if it is powerless to expiate sin, is equally powerless to ward off its blows. But, as Bossuet tersely puts it, "death began badly." Its first victory, gained over an innocent victim and near the altar, gives us a presentiment that its claims are undermined and that sacrificed innocence will finally destroy its power.

Some day, again on an altar, death will dare strike

down as a victim of sin, the truly Just One, the Holy One of God, the Author of life; and this victory will lead to its own ruin. The blood of the first Abel, though pure, could not wash away the sin of the world; worse still, it cried to heaven for vengeance and increased the weight of the original malediction on the murderer, Cain (Gen. IV, 10-11; Matt. XVIII, 35). The blood of the second Abel, the blood truly innocent and holy, will ascend toward heaven crying for mercy (Heb. XII, 24); it will fall back on the brothers of Jesus, even on sinners, His murderers, with the grace of blessing and pardon. Sin being once destroyed, the only claim which death had upon us will be wiped out forever.[1]

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"What shall I say of Isaac who himself carries the wood on which he is to be immolated, while his father prepares to sacrifice him on the mountain in accordance with the orders of God? O spectacle of inhumanity! I cry. But if I think of Jesus, our Savior, it becomes a spectacle of mercy. It is a picture of Jesus who carries His Cross to be immolated upon it on the Mount of Calvary, delivered up by His own Father."[2] Abraham's sacrifice sufficed to bring down, not only on Israel, but on all peoples and nations, the great benediction (Gen. XXII). And this benediction poured forth on the world, is nothing less than Jesus whom His Father will sacrifice

[1] Bossuet, *Elévations sur les mystères*, VIIIe Sem., 4e élév.
[2] Bossuet, *Serm. pour le deuxième dimanche après l'Epiphanie* (Vivès, VIII, 403).

through love for the world: "For God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (John III, 16). Jesus is the Lamb substituted for Isaac and the human race on the altar of holocaust and expiation.

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Another figure of Jesus is Melchisedech who is mentioned in Genesis only as a king and priest. Contrary to its custom, Holy Writ explains neither the origin, the birth, nor the death of this person. Without any mention of his father or mother, without the specific beginning or end of his days being given, he appears only as a king, and as a priest who offers up the sacrifice of bread and wine. Abraham bows beneath his hand raised in benediction, and at once we see the entire Levitical priesthood bent before this special priest, because he typifies more perfectly the eternal Pontiff, Jesus. Centuries later, the Epistle to the Hebrews, following the Psalmist, will develop at length this glorious symbolism and proclaim Jesus a Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech (Gen. XIV; Ps. CII; Heb. VII).[1]

Each morning now we invoke these three grand sacerdotal types, Abel, Abraham, Melchisedech, at that most solemn moment when Jesus is on the altar in a state of mystic immolation. In order that our

[1] Cf. Bossuet, *Elévations sur les mystères,* VIIIe Sem., 10e élév., and XIIIe Sem., 6e élév.

offering may please God and be accepted as were theirs of old, we enter, so to speak, into their dispositions,—the purity of the just Abel, the spirit of sacrifice of Abraham, and the all-embracing religion of Melchisedech.

II.

Speaking of the Levitic sacrifices, St. Augustine remarks that the multiplicity of forms and rites was necessary to represent the one great sacrifice (*De Civit. Dei*, X, 20). Many a time has he, like others of the Fathers, endeavored to trace in the Law the features of Jesus. Without going as far as the Fathers did, St. Thomas, in the question *De Cæremonialium præceptorum causa*, seeks always in Jesus the reason of every essential rite (1-2^{æ}, q. 102).

Allegory may not appeal to us as it did to St. Augustine or even to St. Thomas; we belong to a strictly matter-of-fact age. But natural explanations of details, suggested or imposed by history and criticism, can never suppress the rôle of faith seeking to interpret the supernatural symbolism of the Mosaic worship; no more than the discovery of secondary causes which may have had their share in the formation of ceremonial laws, such as the influence of Egyptian surroundings or Chaldean traditions, can suppress the fact of a supernatural divine intervention and intention, by which the priesthood and sacrifice of the Old Testament were ordained to typify Jesus, the Priest and Victim of the New.

Thus it is that in the Paschal Lamb, in the victim of the Covenant or of Solemn Expiation, in the lamb

of perpetual sacrifice, in all the victims, we can now recognize through faith, the Lamb of God, the Victim substituted for the human race and dying on the altar of the Cross to deliver us from the servitude of sin, to give to the Church the perpetual sacrifice of the Eucharist, to consecrate the New and Universal Covenant of souls, whose object is the possession of heaven.

Again, in the communion of the peace-offerings and even in the prohibition to eat of the victim for sin, as likewise in the obligation to burn outside the camp the flesh immolated in the Solemn Expiation, we can now, through faith, recognize Jesus, the true peace-offering, the real victim for sin, whose expiatory and sacred Flesh will become the Bread which makes us truly divine.

Lastly, in the pontiff and the priests who are obliged to be holy because they offer incense to the Lord, and who are consecrated with such detail of purification, we can now see clearly the types of the High Priest without stain, Christ Himself, consecrated and raised above sinners to reach the heavens. There also, we can discern the priesthood of the New Law: those truly consecrated priests, whom Jesus will make other Christs in marking them with His character; those priests whom Jesus will maintain in the superior sanctity of a perpetual chastity and immolation by becoming each day their sacerdotal victim on the Eucharistic altar.

SECOND PART.

THE REALIZATION.

JESUS, CONSTITUTED BY THE INCARNATION ITSELF THE PRIEST PAR EXCELLENCE, OFFERS UP ON THE ALTAR OF THE CROSS THE INFINITE SACRIFICE.

CHAPTER I.

Christ the High Priest.

The Epistle to the Hebrews proclaims Jesus Christ as the perfect High Priest, figured by the priesthood of the Old Law, and consecrated a priest totally and substantially by the Incarnation itself.

I.

It was God Himself who deigned to apply to Jesus Christ the prophecy in act, called the Levitical priesthood. This He did in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Inspired to enlighten and comfort some Judeo-Christians, this epistle has been for generation after generation of priests, as it will remain until the end of time for the Elect of the Lord, a kind of family history, the memorial of their nobility.

The epistle was composed very probably between the years 60 and 70 A. D. At that time, among the members of a community of converted Jews in Rome or Jerusalem, or perhaps, in some other oriental city, there were many neophytes, who, insufficiently instructed and shaken by persecution, left the Christian assembly, became relaxed in morals, and even seemed to be on the road to apostasy. To enlighten and strengthen these wavereers, St. Paul, or the disciple who wrote in his name and under his inspiration, addressed to them a long thesis upholding the

superiority and security of the New Dispensation.[1]

That the Christian religion has legitimately supplanted the old Jewish worship, and that it will last to the end of time, because its mediator Jesus is the only true mediator, the only one who by His Person, His priesthood, and His sacrifice leads us to God and attaches us to Him: such is the dogmatic thesis of the above-mentioned epistle.

To follow this thesis in all its developments, besides being unnecessary, would take us too far afield. But before taking up separately the sacerdotal traits of Christ to bring them into full light, it may not be amiss to sketch an outline of the thesis showing us these traits gathered together and placed in their natural setting.

In the epistle, to prove the superiority of the Christian religion, three contrasts are set forth as follows:

I. The Person of Christ is compared with the other mediators (I-V).

Moses and the angels, who were but creatures and servants, were the instruments of the Old Covenant; the founder of the New, Jesus Christ, is King and Creator; He is the splendor and glorious image of the Father. He is the Son of God; and this in spite of all the humiliations that He has embraced to assimilate Himself to His brothers and become through

[1] Cf. Hasting's *Dictionary of the Bible*, 1905: word "Hebrews" (Ep.). Cf. Prat, *Théologie de St. Paul*, I, pp. 498-516. Cf. *Cath. Encyc.*: word "Hebrews" (Ep.). Cf. *Rev. Biblique*, 1er Janv., 1912: "Les destinataires de l'Ep. aux Hébr.," p. 50, etc.

experience a compassionate and faithful High Priest.

II. The priesthood of Christ is opposed to the Levitical priesthood (V-VIII).

1. Christ realizes supereminently the definition of a high priest: One who represents man before God, who is willing to help the unfortunate, who is called by God Himself to offer the saving sacrifice (V, 1-11). Then comes a long parenthesis on the dangers of being weak and hesitating in faith; it closes with the repeated affirmation that Jesus is made a High Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech (V, VI).

2. Christ is a priest according to the order of Melchisedech; but Abraham, the ancestor, and in some way, the source or head of the Levitical priesthood, bowed as an inferior before Melchisedech, the representative of Christ as a priest; he paid him tithes of the spoils taken in battle, and received his blessing. Moreover, Jesus is constituted a priest by the most solemn oath, and His priesthood is to last forever (VII, 1-28).

Jesus is therefore the perfect priest who takes the place of the ancient priesthood and establishes a New Covenant (VIII).

III. Christ's sacrifice is set over against that of Aaron (IX; X, 1-17).

The sacred writer begins by describing the ancient Tabernacle where the high priest entered but once a year and alone, thus signifying that access to God was not yet free; this he compares with heaven, the true Tabernacle of God, where Jesus enters and which He opens to us with His blood (IX, 1-12).

The sacrifice of the Covenant and the sacrifice of Annual Expiation—both inefficacious and needing a kind of perpetual complement through new offerings —are then opposed to the unique sacrifice by which our Pontiff establishes the Eternal Testament and consummates our sanctification (IX, 13-28; X, 1-24).

The epistle closes with an ardent exhortation to be firm in the faith, to practice the spirit of sacrifice, to be obedient and to pray.[1]

II.

The Christian religion is, then, according to the Epistle to the Hebrews, the perfect and definitive worship, its founder being at the same time the Son of God and the preeminent Priest. But these are not two attributes of Jesus that can be separated; for Jesus is the Anointed One, the High Priest, only because He is the Son of God. *De quo nobis grandis sermo, et ininterpretabilis ad dicendum* (V, 11). This unutterable grandeur of Christ's priesthood, spoken of by the sacred writer, is involved in the mystery of its origin or constitution; that is, in the mystery of the Incarnation itself. For through His Incarnation it is that Our Lord not only becomes the religious head of humanity, but is formally called and consecrated to be the pontiff of the saving sacrifice. Through His Incarnation as through an infinite ordination He receives all that is essential and necessary in the priest.

[1] Cf. Prat, o. c., pp. 588-591. Cf. Rivière, *The Doctrine of Atonement*, London, 1909, I. Chap. V, pp. 64-76.

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Bring back to mind the essential characteristics of the priesthood as revealed by the religious history of antiquity and as analyzed in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The priest must be a man of the tribe or people whom he is called to represent before God. This first feature of the priesthood we find admirably brought out in the Epistle to the Hebrews: The priest must be more than a member of the family, he must be a man like the rest of men, acquainted with suffering and infirmity; in his own experience he will realize our miseries, and he will thereby know the better how to compassionate us and how to present our wants more faithfully before God (V, 1-13). In the second place the priest must be officially chosen and deputed to represent the people. In a revealed religion this deputation is accomplished by a divine call: "For every high-priest taken from among men is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God. . . . Neither doth any man take the honor to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was" (Heb. V, 1, 4). Again, the priest must be consecrated, he must be set apart as a man of God. The epistle says only that "Every high-priest is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God" (V, 1). But to be ordained or constituted permanently to perform the sacred ministry is a form of consecration or special union with God. The word "consecrated," then, expresses the idea implied in the word *constituitur*, "is ordained," used in the epistle; and

this the more especially, since, in ancient worship, and particularly among the Jews, the act which constituted the priest as the official minister of things holy and a man of God was, at least for the heads of the sacerdotal tribe, nothing less than a rite of consecration. This rite was made up of purificative ablutions and anointings, which penetrated the subject as though endowed with virtue from on high. Finally, the priest must be consecrated above all for sacrifice. He will dispense light and sanctity, but only as a consequence and by virtue of his oblation. He is more than aught else the minister of the altar: "that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins" (V, 1).

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Through the Incarnation itself these four characteristics of the priest are realized in Jesus.[1]

The Incarnation or Hypostatic Union makes Jesus one of our race.

Not to an angelic nature, nor yet to a human nature directly created by God in a perfect state, is the Word united. In the womb of the Virgin Mary He has taken our flesh. Our brother in blood, subject to our infirmities and temptations, He is in all things, sin alone excepted, like to us. Tenderly compassionate toward all our miseries, He will be our faithful Pontiff before God. "For nowhere doth he take hold of the angels: but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold. Wherefore it behoved him in all things to be

[1] Cf. Girh, *Holy Sacrifice of the Mass,* I, Chap. XI: "The High Priesthood of Jesus Christ," pp. 42-47.

made like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high-priest before God, that he might be a propitiation for the sins of the people" (Heb. II, 16-18). "For we have not a high-priest, who cannot have compassion on our infirmities: but one tempted in all things like as we are, without sin" (Heb. IV, 15). Here we may be pardoned if we quote at length the words of Bossuet, who has many times commented on this text in his own striking manner: "You did not assume our nature, sound, perfect, and immortal both in soul and in body, such as it first came from Your hands. Because You wished to bear our sins You have taken that nature such as sin and Your avenging justice made it, mortal, infirm, and poor. This nature You wished to bear on the Cross, innocent victim that You were; You wished to bear it during the whole course of Your life, You the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world, but who does not take them away except by first transferring them to Your own person. But . . . since You could not place upon Yourself the guilt and stain of sin, You have brought upon You at least its pain and just punishment, mortality with all it entails. Through this then You have become acquainted with the evils that encompass us; and having experienced them all, You have become our compassionate High Priest; for, as the Apostle says, it was necessary that You should be made like Your brothers in all things, and thus become a merciful High Priest. . . . For who can doubt that You are able to help us in miseries which You have felt Yourself, since You have experienced them only because it

pleased You, and because You wished that in bearing them, there should spring up within You that practical compassion which You now have for those who suffer the same. Be therefore praised forever, O great High Priest, because You have had compassion on us, not as the fortunate are wont to pity the unfortunate, but as the unfortunate commiserate one another in their common depth of misery. . . . So that having passed through all the miseries of our sinful nature and having experienced them all, sin excepted, You feel all our evils and You compassionate them as something common to us and to You." [1]

The Incarnation or Hypostatic Union makes Jesus a man divinely called to the priesthood.

"Neither doth any man take the honor to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was. So Christ also did not glorify himself, that he might be made a high-priest: but he that said unto him: *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* As he saith also in another place: *Thou art a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech*" (Heb. V, 4-6). To grasp the full strength of this argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews, we must remember that in the second Psalm an extraordinary divine filiation is plainly alluded to as a main feature of the future Messiah; and that in the one hundred and ninth Psalm, at least as it reads in the Septuagint, this special divine sonship of the Messiah is con-

[1] Bossuet, *Méditations sur l'Evangile,* Dernière semaine, 95e Jour. Cf. same, *Premier Serm. pour Noël* (Vivès, VIII, p. 254). Cf. also Prat, o. c., p. 528: "Communauté de nature et de compassion."

nected with the announcement of his priesthood according to the order of Melchisedech. The two texts are brought together by the author of the epistle to underline more deeply the intimate connection which he sees between the sacerdotal vocation of Christ and His divine Sonship. And because in the full light of the Gospel Revelation he sees the extraordinary filiation as a true and natural divine Sonship based on the Hypostatic Union, he means in the passage quoted above, actually to affirm that there is a real correlation between the Incarnation or the Hypostatic Union and the sacerdotal vocation of Jesus. He tells us, therefore, that at the same time, and for the selfsame reason, the Father gives the name of Son and the name of Priest to the Man-God. Or rather it is because He is His Son that the Father proclaims the Anointed Messiah worthy to sit at His right hand as the eternal High Priest according to the order of Melchisedech.

The Incarnation or Hypostatic Union preeminently consecrates Jesus in purity and in union with God.

An innocent high priest was needed, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens (Heb. VII, 26). We have seen the powerless efforts of humanity in ancient times to create a holy priest. What the sprinkling with blood could not do, the Hypostatic Union has effected. It sets Jesus apart from the mass of sinners; it makes Him pure, divinely pure; it makes Him impeccable, absolutely impeccable.

Still more; like an unction infinite in power, the Hypostatic Union, penetrating the humanity of Jesus, consecrates it and makes it really divine. Of old, the sacred oil used in the Levitic ordinations was the symbol of the power of the Most High penetrating the candidates for the priesthood and taking possession of them forever. Now the divinity itself of the Word Incarnate becomes, as it were, the oil with which Jesus is consecrated. This divinity spreading over the human nature of Christ penetrates it and takes possession of it for time and eternity in an ineffable personal union. Through this union Jesus is more than the instrument, the minister, or the man of God. He is the Man-God, who has no personality, and consequently no *raison d'être*, no moral value, except through the divine Person of the Word; that is, through God and for God. He is ever a man, but a man so penetrated, so permeated with divine sanctity that His proper name, that which tells us best what He is, is the Holy One, the One Anointed or Consecrated, the Christ.

"Is it not," says Bossuet, "the Son of Man whom God has anointed with that wonderful unction from which He obtains even His name? In Holy Writ He is variously called the Messias, the Christ of God, the Anointed of God, and all these names express but the same thing in different language. . . . For just as in the old dispensation kings and ministers of sacrifice were constituted such by anointing, so the repairer of our fallen nature, destined to be both king of the true people and the only sacrificer of the true God, is called by an extraordinary prerogative

the Anointed of God. . . . And here we must not understand some kind of a bodily anointing; *that which anoints our High Priest is the divinity itself of the Word of God.* For, as it is the nature of oil first of all to spread over the things to which it is applied, and then, penetrating them as deeply as possible, to become in some way so incorporated, so intimately united with them, that all make but one substance; so also, the divinity of the Word in uniting itself to the humanity of Jesus, first of all extends itself to all that humanity and then penetrates it so profoundly that it becomes effectively incarnate in it; so that by virtue of this ineffable union of the divine Word with the sacred humanity there results but one substantial being. And it is from this divine and miraculous anointing that Jesus is preeminently called the Anointed or Christ." [1]

The Incarnation or Hypostatic Union sets Jesus apart as the one who is preeminently called and consecrated to be the minister of the infinite sacrifice of the Cross.

"When he (Christ) cometh into the world he saith: *Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not: but a body thou hast fitted to me: Holocausts for sin did not please thee. Then said I: Behold I come: in the head of the book it is written of me: that I should do thy will, O God.* . . . In the which will, we are sanctified by the oblation of the body of Jesus Christ once" (Heb. X, 5-10). The Incarnation is barely

[1] Bossuet, *Premier serm. pour le 2e dim. de l'Avent* (Vivès, VIII, 163). Cf. also, *Elévations sur les Mystères,* XIIIe sem., 1e and 2e élév.

accomplished when Jesus expresses that His mission and His purpose in life consist of sacrifice; He offers His body for the altar to take the place of the imperfect victims of the past. He presents Himself as our Savior, because He will be a priest and will offer Himself as a victim on the Cross. "And being consummated, he became, to all that obey him, the cause of eternal salvation" (Heb. V, 9).

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Such is the mystery of the origin of the Savior's priesthood: The Hypostatic Union, making Him the Man-God, makes Him at the same time one of our race, called and consecrated to offer sacrifice.

It can be said that the only, or at least, the principal object of the Incarnation was to give to God and the world a worthy High Priest for the purpose of adoration and expiation. True indeed, the Word was made flesh for our illumination and supernatural vivification (John I, 1-17). But these graces of light and deification, since they flow from the Cross, are a consequence of Jesus' priesthood and sacrifice. The Incarnation is, then, above all else the ordination of the indispensable priest, the *Savior-Priest*—it is the constitution of the eternal priesthood. Christ, the Anointed One, the Priest, is the name which best fits the Word Incarnate. The name Jesus, brought from heaven by the angel, expresses the most visible, most utilitarian side, as we might say, of the mission of the Son of God in the world; but the name Christ seems to be more fundamental, more essential, since the Word Incarnate is Jesus the Savior only by

virtue of His consecration and sacrifice. And this name of "the Anointed One" is not an adventitious title, a simple adjective expressing an accidental quality. It is in a way *substantial*, expressing the reason of the being, and even, of the very existence of Him who bears it. We at a given moment in our lives have become priests; this new quality we have acquired while retaining our first personality. Jesus did not become a priest; He was always one. For Him, to be and to be a priest are one and the same thing. He was born a priest. Nay more; the same act, which, by uniting His holy humanity to the Word called it into being, personally effected His priestly consecration. Existing only as a priest, He is a priest entirely and, in a manner, substantially. This is well expressed by Thomassin in the following beautiful passage (Chap. XIII, n. 9): *Cæteris hominibus naturæ jam personæque integritatem assecutis, superfunditur in vicem ascitiæ dignitatis, oleum quo sacerdotes et Christi efficiuntur. At Christo Domino oleum illud ipsa divinitas Verbi est . . . persona ejus ipsissima est. Eo enim oleo Christus est eo sacerdos. . . . Christus nec vel puncto temporis ullo est quin sacerdos sit, cum eodem unguine substantiali et hypostatico et Christus et sacerdos perficiatur.*

CHAPTER II.

Sacerdos Alter Christus.

When we study the priesthood of Christ, the grandeur, the obligations, and the strength of our own priesthood are brought home to us.

We are true priests of the Most High. We are of a noble race chosen and consecrated to offer sacrifice. But all this we are only with dependence on Jesus and in union with Him. We are subordinate priests, priests of secondary rank, so to speak; we are representative priests, vicars of Jesus. There is but one priesthood, the plentitude of which is found in Jesus; in this we become real participators through our ordination.

This dependent condition is the principle of our greatness, of our obligations, and of our sacerdotal strength. It is because we are not alone nor isolated in our sacred ministry, it is because we act in the name and through the power of Jesus, that we are so great, and that we can and ought to be holy. Isolated, to speak truly, the priest never is; he always fulfils his sacred ministry in the name of the religious society: with him all his brothers in worship pray and adore. By the side of the Catholic priest the Church, the great society of souls, ever stands: *Nos servi tui sed et plebs tua sancta (Roman Missal).* Ever around the priest at the altar are grouped

Christian souls, their prayers ascending in unison toward God with a single outburst of adoration; all that there is of religion, of purity, of love in the world, is condensed in the prayer of the priest: what a grand spectacle for our faith! And yet all this, though great in itself, counts, in comparison with the reality unfolded to our gaze when we look deeper beneath the surface, as nothing. For, in adoration and prayer at the altar, it is not the priest alone who stands, nor the priest with the people; but added to them, or rather at their head, is He who is all religion, all purity, all love. His priests are only His representatives, His lieutenants. True priests we are, and truly have we been chosen and consecrated to offer up sacrifice in the religious society; but this we do through Christ and in Him. We are other Christs. *Sacerdos alter Christus.* From these three words we derive our greatness, our obligations, and our strength.

I.

The source of our sacerdotal greatness is the character of Jesus imprinted on our souls.

At the very dawn of reason, or rather, of faith, we may have been attracted by a ray from the sanctuary. And through the long but sweet years of preparation, through youth and young manhood, we continued pious and pure, our hearts ever turned toward the altar. At last the day came when the dream of our life was realized: *Juravit Dominus; tu es sacerdos in æternum.* Our individuality was not substantially modified. In our nature, in our ex-

ternal appearance, nothing was changed. We had acquired only a certain power, one more quality, entirely spiritual and purely accidental. But invisible and accidental as it was, this power, this quality, was, none the less, something real and great. While we were at the foot of the altar, kneeling before the Bishop, God, veiled beneath the words of the liturgy and the symbolism of gesture and sacred oil, worked in our soul, and there created a new being, supernatural and mysterious—the sacerdotal character.[1]

Catholic teaching, consecrated by the Council of Trent (Sess. VII, Can. 9; Sess. XXIII, Chap. IV, Can. 4), imposes on our belief as a truth of faith that the sacerdotal character is more than an empty title, more than a simple mission or exterior function; it is at least one of these realities of the moral order which create in the soul real obligations and true rights. Just as canonical institution, the election to the presidency, marriage, and religious profession, engender, and very really so, the episcopal jurisdiction, the first magistracy of the nation, the conjugal bond, and the religious obligations, so also, baptism, confirmation, and ordination produce in the soul a true dignity, which binds and consecrates us for life to God in the Christian religion, at the same time that it confers on us certain rights. Holy Orders in particular, setting us apart from the world and consecrating us men of God forever, gives us the right to administer the sacraments, and especially the power both to offer the holy sacrifice of the

[1] Cf. Manning, *The Eternal Priesthood*, Chap. I: "The Nature of Priesthood." Cf. Planus, *Le Prêtre*, II, 1e and 2e Conférences.

Mass and to dispense to others its fruits. This, at least, the Council certainly wished to define. In its definition it had especially in view the erroneous opinion which looked on the priesthood as a purely transitory power, a mere office or ministry which man could put aside at will to return to the state of a layman. Once a priest, a priest forever, said the Council.

But the words used to define the existence of the sacramental character seem to go further. When the Council says: *In tribus sacramentis . . . imprimi characterem . . . in anima, id est, signum quoddam spirituale et indelibile*, it uses the language and expressions of all the great scholastic doctors, and of St. Augustine and St. Cyril of Jerusalem, who have seen in the character a sign, a physical mark, an ontological reality impressed on the soul as a stamp or seal. So clearly is this insisted upon in their writings, that, to deny the existence of this sign or physical mark and to reduce the character to a mere moral dignity, though not against defined faith, would be to run counter to the voice and to the spirit of all Tradition.

The sacerdotal character in any case is conceived as a reality conferring on us the power of Jesus and stamping us with His image. As the Hypostatic Union constituted and consecrated Jesus as the Man-God, the minister of sacrifice and the dispenser of the graces of salvation; so also, though in an infinitely lower degree and in a manner purely subordinate and accidental, the sacerdotal character constitutes and consecrates us as the men of God, ministers of the same sacrifice and the same grace. It

confers upon us the sacred power of the High Priest, and at the same time, as a sign of investiture, as an official decoration authorizing the exercise of this power, it reproduces in the soul an image which ennobles it, transfiguring it through the impress of the features of Christ Himself. Particularly vivid, and also very just and very apt, are the words of St. Thomas, when he refers to this special mark of the soul: *Character sacramentalis specialiter est character Christi, cujus sacerdotio configurantur fideles secundum characteres sacramentales qui nihil aliud sunt quam quædam participationes sacerdotii Christi ab ipso derivatæ* (3, q. 63, a. 3). A configuration to the priesthood of Christ and a participation in that priesthood: this is what St. Thomas understands by the threefold sacramental character. But his definition is realized fully only in the highest of these gifts—the sacerdotal character. There is, then, in the soul of a priest a sacred power which is very actual, as also a divine impress which is very real, an image, a quality bringing with it a dignity and conferring nobility. And the power and the image both come equally to him from Jesus as a priest. They are the two inseparable elements of one complete gift which makes us other Christs, rendering us capable of offering sacrifice, capable of sanctifying others, capable of saying as efficaciously as Jesus Himself: *Hoc est corpus meum—Hic est calix sanguinis mei—Ego te absolvo.*

Our faith and piety would fain proceed further and inquire into the inmost nature of this power and divine impression. But to do so would be in vain.

For here the veil of mystery meets our eyes; what is beyond it we are not given to see. And after all, do we not see enough? We know that these supernatural realities exist; we know that they are a part of the priesthood of Jesus, and, consequently, that they are, by analogy, connected with the Incarnation, since the latter is but the infinite and primordial ordination to the priesthood. Strong though these expressions may be, they are not exaggerated, they cannot say too much. *De quo nobis grandis sermo et ininterpretabilis ad dicendum* (Heb. V, 11). Human speech will ever remain incapable of proclaiming all the greatness of our priesthood. Light from God, and constantly more light, we need, to get even a glimpse of its magnificence and thus be enabled to lisp, as it were, its wonders: the wonders of the Hypostatic Union, that ordination, which, by infusing divinity into the sacred humanity, has constituted in Jesus the original priesthood fully and substantially; the wonders of our own ordination, which, by conferring on us a part of Christ's infinite consecration, assimilates us in reality to the Holy One of God, and invests us with His powers: so that henceforth Jesus sees Himself in us, and offers sacrifice through us to the Father for the salvation of souls.

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The special tenderness and the ardent prayers of Jesus for His own, we may now better understand. We are no longer surprised when He calls them His friends; we do not wonder when He sends them as the

Father has sent Him, when He loves them as the Father has loved Him, when He sacrifices Himself for their special sanctification (John XV, 9, 15; XVII, 9, 19). To the end, He had His mind set on saving those whom the Father had given to Him (John XVII, 12). How often with the tender yet reproachful words, "Friend, for what art thou come?" will He not speak to the erring heart of His priest, saving him from the bitterness of consummated sacrilege, or at least snatching him from the clutches of dark despair. And, especially in our days, it is a touching sight to mark the supernatural impulse which inspires the purest souls everywhere, outside the cloister as well as within, to pray and, if necessary, to immolate themselves for the priests of Jesus. It can be no less than an inspiration coming from Christ, ever mindful of His other self, the minister of sacrifice.

Now, also, we may better understand the unbounded wonder, the awe, which, in thinking of the priesthood, overcame those saints and great servants of God—Bérulle, Condren, Olier, St. Vincent of Paul, the Blessed Eudes, the Blessed Curé of Ars. And not in modern times alone have we examples of this saintly admiration. The first centuries as well bear witness to this same faith, to this profound respect in which the priesthood was held. We need but mention St. Ephrem of Edessa, who, on bended knees and with tearful eyes, besought the people to venerate the dignity of the priest: *O miraculum stupendum . . . O tremendum sacerdotii mysterium . . . genu posito lacrymis atque suspiriis oro ut*

hunc sacerdotii thesaurum suscipiamus (Serm. *De Sacerdot.*).

But do we ourselves sufficiently realize the great gift we have received from God? Do we value the treasure we possess? Has it occurred to us that we should frequently render thanks to God for our priesthood? Up to the time when the recent reformation of the Breviary went into effect there was celebrated in all Sulpician seminaries a feast called: *Festum divini Sacerdotii Domini Nostri Jesu Christi et omnium sanctorum sacerdotum et levitarum.* The office of the feast and of its octave is taken from some of the finest and most striking pages written on the priesthood by the doctors of the Church. May we express a wish to see this beautiful office, not only reinstated where it existed before, but even some day extended to all priests? The feast of *Corpus Christi* commemorates the gift of the Eucharist to Christians in general. Would it not be well if the clergy had their own feast to celebrate their own special gift? "But," it may be objected, "this office is too abstract, too ethereal in its object: Rome does not like, nor does it approve, devotions the object of which is not well determined and sufficiently concrete." To this objection we can answer that those who instituted this feast possessed in an eminent degree, as is well known, the spirit of Rome and the spirit of God. It can hardly be denied that the founder of St. Sulpice, together with Condren, the Blessed Eudes and St. Vincent of Paul were predestined to reawaken and bring to realization, in the whole Church as well as in France, the

ideal of the divine priesthood. And the very feasts they instituted had a place, a special rôle in that work of providential renovation. Besides, is not Christ's priesthood, identified as it is with the Incarnation, one of the first, one of the principal supernatural realities? Is there not here a truth which is the most concrete, sensible, and determined in itself, and which is at the same time closely allied to the priest? Christian people can grasp the meaning of this feast and take part in it to thank God for the gifts which come through His priests. Thus would faith in the priesthood be increased, and it would be infused with new life and vigor against the ever infiltering and baneful spirit of our own days.

Would that we had such an understanding of our divine vocation as would enkindle in our hearts a loving veneration of the priesthood wherever found, be it in ourselves or in others! If we properly comprehend our priesthood we will vividly feel the special bond, the supernatural consanguinity which is generated between us and our brethren by our common possession of the same priestly character. And evidently it is this bond that is meant by Jesus, when, speaking in the Cenacle to the first priests, He insists on the necessity of fraternal love. "This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you" (John XV, 12). It was not with that common love given to all men that Jesus loved us. He loved us with a particular love as His consecrated ones, as His chosen missionaries. He asks us then to love our brothers in the priesthood from a superior motive and in a special measure. This

fraternal charity is a distinctive mark of the good priest. He understands and honors his priesthood, who loves it in the souls of his brethren. "A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another as I have loved you. . . . By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another" (John XIII, 34-35). The voice of faith, we might almost say the cry of blood, imposes on us a loving devotion to each priestly soul. Under all the defects and all the faults of the priest, even though he may have dragged his soul time and time again in the mire, there will remain forever, ineffably beautiful, adorably amiable, the image of Christ and the grandeur of His priesthood.

II.

The source of our priestly obligations is to be found in the sacerdotal character impressed on our souls.

The words *Sacerdos alter Christus* remain forever living and true. But to be other Christs we must be what Christ was: a brother ever moved with pity for men; one called and consecrated to sacrifice.

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If we wish to be truly other Christs, true vicars of Jesus, we must be men of our race and our time, sympathizing with our brothers in their miseries and bearing their sins.

Nobody was more fully, more perfectly a man than Jesus. The refined qualities of His humanity compelled admiration and love even when His divinity

was denied. Let the priest be, then, fully and perfectly a man. Let him cultivate all his natural qualities, but in a supernatural manner; not in the interest of self, not in the desire of gaining popularity or attracting attention, but for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Nothing that we may do can be too much, or be done too well, when we wish to attract to God souls that are separated from the faith, careless of things supernatural, and even seemingly inaccessible to their influence. Without doubt, it is first of all by our devotion to prayer and by our striving after virtue that we shall show forth our sacerdotal character and maintain its vital energy. But if we be truly zealous, we shall use to their full value all our natural faculties also. For, by being men in the true sense of the word, we do not detract from our priestly character but add to it. How strikingly is this manliness, the fit and enhancing setting of the priesthood, portrayed by Montalembert in his words on the death of Henry Perreyve: "I have seen this singular spectacle," he writes, "which the Church of Jesus Christ alone can produce, the figure of a priest, young and imposing, attractive though austere, gentle yet manly, loving all that is good, all that is great, holy and generous, . . . a man of daring, full of the spirit of liberty and honor, but at the same time a man of fervor, ever breathing the spirit of penance and holiness. . . . At the end of a long life I must confess that it is the grandest sight which it has been my lot to contemplate in this world."

Belonging to his race and time, the priest should

keep in touch with modern thought, studying and striving to understand all that interests his age. Evidently it is not at all meant that he should indulge in every intellectual whim, or follow up every wild dream of his time. The priest, like everybody else, is bound to take heed of his natural weakness, to watch over and repress all unhealthy curiosity; in a word, to avoid all dangerous and voluntary occasions of moral or intellectual perversion. Nor is it meant that he should create for himself an agreeable pastime by seeking in communion with kindred spirits or in the refined enjoyment of art and literature a compensation for the less noble pleasures which he has sacrificed. It is simply meant that he should make himself better able to understand the mind, and consequently, more efficient to save the soul, of modern man. To this mind with its errors, its passions, its dreams, the priest by virtue of his very mission ought to bring the light of God's word, which alone, to-day as yesterday and at all times, can assuage man's passions and give new life to his heart. But it is not enough to know the sources of darkness in others. It is necessary that we ourselves should love the word of God, and live by it, before we can send it like a ray of light and a germ of life into the hearts of our brethren. We should know how to adapt this word to the various circumstances that may arise; we should be apt at making it our own; we should know how to speak it. This calls for life-long study united with prayerful meditation of the sacred sciences. It also calls for an unbiased mind, initiated as much as possible in all the learning and

philosophy, as well as in the manner of speaking, of our age and country.[1]

The cultivation of the heart must receive special attention from the priest. Our sympathy and tenderness must not be allowed to become atrophied through inaction. True, indeed, a compassionate nature will bring us suffering; but it will also make us strong for the doing of good. Jesus consented to be "encompassed by infirmity" so that He might be able to compassionate others and to be a faithful High Priest. If the priest become in all things like his brothers, not keeping aloof from the poor and the sick, from the afflicted and the sinful; if he receive from heaven and keep alive within him the gift of compassionating pity; if he preserve the gift of natural tenderness, that craving to relieve the misery of others in order to relieve his own, and if he, at the same time, fortify and elevate this feeling through faith: he will indeed be a faithful priest, an effective mediator. Instinctively, suffering souls will be drawn to him. And he himself, moved and saddened by their sorrow and their sin, will discover within himself words which reach the heart, and the accent of that tearful prayer which is heard by the Most High.[2]

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If we would be other Christs, true vicars of Jesus, we must be called by the special love of our

[1] Cf. Card. Gibbons, *The Ambassador of Christ,* Chap. XVI-XXII.

[2] Cf. Card. Vaughan, *The Young Priest,* Conf. X: "Affability, Gentleness, Tact." Cf. Hebr. V, 7.

Heavenly Father who recognizes us as His sons. The call of Jesus is intimately connected with His divine Filiation: *Filius meus es tu . . . Tu es sacerdos* (Heb. V, 5, 6). His was the ideal vocation. Ours should be like it in our adoption through grace.

A young man, rich and noble, threw himself at the feet of Jesus one day, and said: "Good Master, what shall I do that I may have life everlasting?" Jesus answering, said to him, "Keep the commandments;" and these the Savior proceeded to enumerate. "Master," insisted the young man, "all these things I have observed from my youth." And Jesus, looking on him, loved him, and said: "One thing is wanting unto thee: go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me" (Mark X, 17 seq.; Matt. XIX, 16 seq.; Luke XVIII, 18 seq.). "JESUS LOOKING ON HIM, LOVED HIM." To each one of us, though in different ways, the call has come enveloped in a glance of love. Jesus, looking upon us, has loved us, and has addressed to us the words first spoken to the young man so long ago: "Come, follow me." Perhaps we could not answer: "All these commandments have I kept from my youth." And yet, the divine love that sought us, by a mysterious and gratuitous choice, has been all-powerful in its attraction and effects; and leaving all, we have followed Christ. In loving us more than we then deserved, Jesus took into account our future holiness. He called us and attracted us on the condition that we would henceforth be His adopted

brothers, true sons of God in sanctifying grace. What a blow to the loving heart of the Savior when the young man recoiled before the thought of sacrificing his riches and went away sad: "(He) went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." The flood of love poured forth on that privileged soul was forced back into the divine heart violently and painfully. But more bitter still for that heart of love was what He foresaw then: the vocations that would be refused or betrayed in ages yet to come. Jesus sees those, who, repelled by the sacrifices entailed by virtue, will refuse at the very outset to follow Him. He sees those, who, after having renounced all, will, when it is too late, turn back toward earthly goods and pleasures: unfortunate priests destined to lead in the sanctuary a life of sadness; their hearts belonging elsewhere, they refuse to exchange with Christ the look of mutual love; in their misery they ever hear a voice which says to them: *Tu es sacerdos in æternum*, but which no longer adds the consoling words: *Filius meus es tu.* The bonds are there, but not the love which makes service sweet. May Jesus preserve us from such a misfortune! May He save us from sin and from sad despair! May we ever remain His brothers by grace, always answering His glance of love with humble, confiding familiarity!

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Again, if we wish to be other Christs, true vicars of Jesus, we must be, as He was, consecrated in purity and union with God.

The rites and formulas used in ordination inculcate the idea of consecration, which connotes purity and union with God. When we were initiated into clerical life by the giving of the tonsure, the Bishop cut off some of our hair to symbolize the renouncing of earthly vanities, while we repeated with him the significant words: *Dominus pars hæreditatis meæ et calicis mei . . .*; and over the soutane, the garment which denoted that we were dead to the world, he clothed us with the surplice, the vestment of heavenly innocence and life. On the day so earnestly desired on which we received the subdeaconship, the Bishop, before we had as yet taken any definite engagements, had solemnly warned us: *Si hunc ordinem susceperitis . . . Deo, cui servire regnare est, perpetuo famulari, et castitatem, illo adjuvante, servare oportebit.* And stepping forward we threw ourselves on the pavement of the sanctuary, like a white row of pure victims immolated in the flower of youth by the heroic vow of chastity. When we were about to be ordained priests, the officiating prelate again recalled to our minds insistently the necessity of purity: *Servate in moribus vestris castæ et sanctæ vitæ integritatem;* a purity exacted by the service of the altar and bought with our own immolation: *Imitamini quod tractatis, quatenus mortis dominicæ mysterium celebrantes, mortificare membra vestra a vitiis et concupiscentiis procuretis.* Then placing his hand on our heads, the Bishop, in the name of God, took possession of our whole being. Lastly, the holy oil spread on our hands symbolized, and at the same time brought into play, that divine

virtue, which, penetrating like a most powerful unction to the very depths of our souls, consecrated us forever.[1]

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Finally, if we would be other Christs, true vicars of Jesus, we must live, like Christ Himself, only for the sacrifice of salvation.

With our hands joined together and still moist with the holy unction, we touched the chalice and host while the Bishop said to us: *Accipe potestatem offerendi sacrificium.* . . . Sacrifice is the principal reason of our consecration. The anointing of Jesus predestined Him to offer the infinite oblation on the Cross; and it is, above all else, to renew that oblation that our hands and our souls were consecrated. Saviors of souls and apostles we must be, but ever through the altar: in the altar we must find, through our daily sacrifice, that divine virtue of growth which alone can render our apostolate fruitful. Already under the Old Law we see the Levitic priest living only for the altar and by the altar. May we do otherwise? Can we be true priests of Jesus if we live for ourselves, seeking our own pleasures, our own interests, caring only for our own reputation? To descend from the sublime heights of the priesthood, and, forgetting the sweetness of the chalice, to cast ourselves in the midst of the conflict of lower appetites, to feed on the vanities of earth! Can it be possible that we are capable of this?

[1] Cf. J. Bruneau, S. S., *Our Priesthood*, St. Louis, 1911. See especially, "Consecration of the Cleric," pp. 17-22; "Subdeaconship," pp. 72-91; "Sanctity of the Priest," pp. 143-152.

Sacerdotem oportet offerre, benedicere, præesse, prædicare et baptizare: May Jesus teach us to understand our real vocation with its chief absorbing duty! By our consecration we are dedicated to live only for the offering of daily sacrifice and for the consequent illumination and sanctification of souls through the graces that flow from the altar. We shall be Other Messiahs, envoys for the salvation of souls, just in the measure in which we are Other Christs, men of God and of sacrifice: *Sicut misit me Pater et ego mitto vos* (John XX, 21); *In iis quæ sunt ad Deum ut offerat dona et sacrificia pro peccatis* (Heb. V, 1).[1]

III.

The source of our strength is the character of Jesus Christ impressed on our souls.

Our greatness and our obligations would crush us if we were to depend on our own forces. We feel that we are always weak, always imperfectly pure, imperfectly consecrated. When we are soaring highest, our too natural affections soon drag us down to earth. Even at the altar, in the very act of offering up the sublime sacrifice, we find ourselves distracted, dull, and incapable of prayer. All this in itself is very humiliating and sad for a priest; without mentioning our unfaithfulness to grace, and our careless dealings with Jesus, so frequent and yet so lightly passed over by us. And though we should fight against and endeavor to diminish these faults, yet, in spite of our

[1] Cf. Canon Keatinge, *The Priest—His Character and Work*, London, 1914; Chap. IV: "Our Daily Mass."

best efforts, some will always be inevitable. But here, for our consolation, we should not forget that he who fulfils so high, so divine a ministry at the altar, is no longer merely a poor human priest who presents himself alone before God, his purity stained and his allegiance to the Almighty disputed by a world of petty interests and earthly affections. He is a man, indeed, who offers sacrifice; but he is a man, who, by reason of his sacerdotal character, has become another Christ. The Father sees Jesus in every priest. It is through the power of Jesus, through His image impressed on our souls bringing with it His infinite purity and His omnipotence in prayer, that we offer the Eucharistic sacrifice each morning. It is also as other Christs, as the Savior Himself, that we enter into relation with souls, and work for their salvation. *Alter Christus. Sicut misit me Pater et ego mitto vos.*

For the priest, who constantly strives toward more and more perfect purity and a greater and still greater devotion to the altar and to souls, there is nothing better than to feel keenly his drawbacks, his incapacity, his faults; but ever should this feeling be united with the thought that whatever he lacks is infinitely supplied by Jesus Himself. Humble and confiding, we confess we are nothing, but we feel that we can do all things in Him who is Christ, the Priest of God. We disappear before Him; we are lost in Him. When we pray and offer sacrifice, it is Christ who prays and offers. When we speak to souls, it is Jesus who speaks the words of salvation. SACERDOS ALTER CHRISTUS.

CHAPTER III.

Virgo Sacerdos.

The study of the priesthood of Jesus throws a new light on the relations of Mary with her divine Son: it shows us Mary intimately associated with the origin and the exercise of this priesthood.

Although our Blessed Mother has been the object of theological treatise and reference at various times almost from the dawn of Christianity, it is especially since the seventeenth century that sacerdotal piety has caused men to take up and study the relations between Mary and the priest. To express these relations a new title has been created, the Virgin Priest, *Virgo Sacerdos.*[1]

This title, evidently, cannot be extended to mean the existence of a quality formally sacerdotal which would make Mary a true priest. Jesus was truly a priest, because in the very mystery of the Incarnation He was chosen and consecrated for the sacrifice of the Cross. We also are priests in all truth; on the

[1] According to Lepin, S. S., *Idée du sacrifice dans la religion chrétienne*, Lyon, 1897, p. 258, and Hugon, O. P., *La Vierge Prêtre*, Paris, 1911, pp. 7-11, we find among the Fathers and Doctors several expressions which come very near the term "Virgo Sacerdos." Since the seventeenth century this term has become very common. Cf. f. i., Olier, *Vie intérieure de la T. S. V.*, Chap. II to XII. Bl. Eudes, *Le cœur admirable de la Mère de Dieu.* Van der Berghe, *Marie et le Sacerdoce.* Belon, S. M., *La corédemption Mariale réalisée—La Vierge Prêtre.*

day of our ordination we were marked with the character of Jesus and invested with His power that we might renew His sacrifice on the Eucharistic altar. Vocation, consecration, priestly character, the offering of the one great sacrifice—all this is wanting in Mary.

But if she is not a priest in the true sense of the word, she is at least intimately related with Jesus' priesthood and with ours.

And first of all, we will not insist here on certain relations which many preachers, as also some writers on sacerdotal asceticism, by a sort of ingenious parallelism, trace between our Eucharistic ministry and the divine maternity: Jesus is the fruit of Mary's womb, they say, and also of our lips; by the word of Mary the Son of God commences to be what He was not, and by the word of the priest He begins to be where He was not, etc. . . . Pious, assuredly, these analogies may appear to be; but some are inclined to think that they are too far-fetched, and leave the soul cold and empty.

But if we go back to the origin of the Eucharist itself, there we discover solid and theological ground for the relations between Mary and the holy priesthood. *Erat mater Jesu ibi* (John II, 1, 3). At her request at Cana the first miracle was performed, a symbol of the Eucharistic miracle. By a sort of fiction containing an underlying truth, Fra Angelico, in one of the frescos of St. Mark's, places Mary near the table of the Last Supper, on her knees, contemplating Jesus who distributes to the Apostles the Eucharist He has just instituted. In spirit she was

really there through her love and her maternal prayers for the first priests of her Son. The precious Blood in the chalice and the sacred Body veiled beneath the white host were the fruit of her womb. Within her womb also was accomplished the consecration of the High Priest of the Last Supper and the Cross.

Reaching back beyond the Last Supper, we touch the most profound relation between Jesus as a priest and Mary: at the moment when the Incarnation was being accomplished, she cooperated with the Holy Trinity in the very constitution of the infinite priesthood.

This mystery of the divine maternity in its relation with the priesthood we would wish to penetrate and sketch. But how can we express the wonders it contains? Where shall we obtain a title which will be strictly theological and at the same time so entirely comprehensive as to give us exactly and fully the relationship connecting Mary with the divine priesthood?

Is the title *Virgo Sacerdos* theological, comprehensive, or even clear enough? Long did we hesitate before using this appellation proscribed by some in the name of strict theology as equivocal and deceptive. We had accordingly almost decided on using the terms *Mater divini sacerdotii*, Mother of the divine priesthood or Mother of the eternal Priest, instead. But now there is no need of further scruple, since the late Pope, Pius X, on May 9, 1906, approved and attached indulgences to a prayer in which Mary is called, not only *Mater Summi*

Sacerdotis, but also expressly *Virgo Sacerdos*.[1]

To avoid, however, all equivocation and danger of error, it may be well to determine exactly the conventional meaning attached to this title. It has been already stated that it is not meant to express any function or quality formally sacerdotal which would make Mary a real priest; but it was added that, even though Mary was not a priest, she had certain well-defined relations with the priesthood of Jesus. It is only as a short and received formula to express these intimate relations, and without any intention of touching on controverted opinions that the term is used here.

The question of terminology is, after all, only secondary. The important thing is to admit the incontestable fact concerning Mary's mission, as disclosed to us by our study of the priesthood. The first essential for piety, for faith, and for theology is to see how Mary, through the Incarnation, is made the cooperator with the Holy Trinity in constituting the eternal priesthood, so that she must be called the mother of the Priest, Jesus, the mother or the source of our priesthood; how in the Temple and at Calvary she appears to us intentionally associated with the first official oblation and with the final sacrifice of our High Priest; how in the three great mys-

[1] *O Maria, . . . Mater Summi Sacerdotis, sacerdos pariter et altare . . . protege Pontificem Maximum, intercede pro nobis et pro sacerdotibus nostris . . . O Virgo Hostia acceptissima Deo . . . quamvis sacramentum ordinis non acceperis, quidquid tamen dignitatis et gratiæ in ipso confertur, de hoc plena fuisti, unde merito Virgo Sacerdos appellaris . . . Mater æterni sacerdotis Jesu Christi, ora pro nobis. . . . Maria, Virgo Sacerdos, ora pro nobis.*— *Eccles. Rev.*, June, 1911, p. 676.

teries—the Incarnation, Presentation, and Compassion—she is the model of our priesthood.

I.

Mary was chosen to cooperate with the Holy Trinity in the mystery of the Incarnation to constitute the new and eternal priesthood.

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Mary did not receive, as we did, a sacred anointing; she was not marked, as we were, with a sacred character nor invested with the powers of the altar to perpetuate an eternal priesthood. But predestined she was by virtue of her divine maternity to cooperate with the Holy Trinity in the formation of the divine priesthood. Evidently it is to the three divine Persons that we must first of all give thanks for bestowing upon us Jesus, our Priest and Victim. However, we should not view in a sacerdotal light the action of the Trinity in operating the mystery of the Incarnation. By its very transcendence the Trinity is kept aside from, or above, all formal communication with the priesthood of Jesus as such. It produced the sacred humanity of the eternal Priest without giving Him anything of Its own substance and without entering into His religious dispositions. Less elevated in itself, the cooperative action of Mary in regard to the priesthood concerns us more. She appears to us in a direct, formal relation with Jesus the Priest. She gave something of her own substance toward constituting the new priesthood:

something that belonged to her was given, and now belongs, to the Priest-Victim. And at the moment when the infinite consecration was operated in her bosom, she entered with all her soul into the religious dispositions of Christ: He was the Anointed of the Most High; He was the Virgin's Son.

Let us pause for a moment in presence of the mystery of the divine maternity and there try to discover all those bonds which, uniting her to the priesthood, form the theological basis of the most glorious prerogatives of our Mother.

The Incarnation is nothing else than the ineffable ordination of Jesus. Its first and principal aim is to consecrate a worthy High Priest for the purpose of adoration and expiation. The same act which called into being the sacred humanity, in uniting that humanity to the Word, consecrated Christ a priest by a divine and eternal anointing. But it was only when Mary, in conscious cooperation, had freely given her consent, that this sublime ordination was accomplished. When she receives the heavenly message from the lips of Gabriel, she understands that the Second Person wishes to become incarnate, in order, above all else, to give to God and the human race the Priest so greatly needed and so anxiously expected through the ages. She knows that the time destined for His coming is at hand; the hour at last has come. All depends now on one last condition: Mary's consent, a consent fully conscious and entirely free, a consent entering into all the designs of God. We all know that homily of St. Bernard in which he dramatically represents the entire human

race, the angels, and God Himself, awaiting in suspense, and, as it were, in supplication, the Virgin's answer (4 hom., *S. Missus*, 8). The answer is given; it comes from her very soul and with all the depth of her devotion: *Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.* And immediately, by the operation of the Holy Ghost acting in conjunction with the Father and the Son, there is formed within her bosom and of her substance that humanity which the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity envelops, penetrates, and consecrates with the unction of His divinity. In Mary's bosom the first Priest is consecrated eternally; in her and through her we possess our priesthood. For us, as well as for God, she wished to be the mother of Jesus, who will mark us with His character and then give us Himself as a victim to be offered daily at our hands.

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In giving her consent, Mary gives of her flesh and blood to constitute the divine priesthood. This alone should suffice to call for our eternal remembrance and admiration. But may we not penetrate further into the mystery and learn how Mary herself cooperated in bestowing on Jesus all the essential traits of the priest?

"I wish to be the mother of a holy generation," said a young girl to the one who had sought her hand and her heart. This should be the dream, or rather the end, of Christian maternity. But in Mary alone has this beautiful ideal been fully realized: *Quod nascetur ex te sanctum*, said the angel to her (Luke

I, 35). Other mothers bring forth sons who may become holy, who may be raised to the priesthood; Mary alone brings forth a Son who *is* holy, who *is* a priest. And it is she who, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, gives to her Child all the traits of the priesthood. She brings Him forth a man of our race, our brother both in blood and in subjection to infirmity; a man who is pure, innocent, without stain; a man of sacrifice.

Through Mary the anointed High Priest partakes of our blood. That sensitive organism, affected to its very depths at sight of our miseries and sins, that heart of compassion and mercy, that nature of His so exquisitely tender—all come to Him from His mother. What human being is more saturated with pity than a mother? And God Himself had directly, delicately adapted, refined and interwoven with tenderness the organism of the divine mother so that she might be able to clothe in more responsive fibers infinite charity itself, and give to her Son a temperament all mercy, a heart all affection and holy passion.[1] The compassionate High Priest who can share our sorrow, the divine Priest weeping truly human tears, the Priest with a heart crushed and bleeding, this Priest we owe to Mary.

In Mary, the chosen Priest of our race, stainless and innocent, finds the first elements of His pure substance. "It was fitting that we should have such a high-priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated

[1] Cf. Belon, *La Vierge Prêtre,* pp. 11-24.

from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. VII, 26). And where among fallen humanity can the material for such a masterpiece be found? Blighted in body and accursed in their very maternity are the daughters of Eve. To the very last molecules of the clay of which humanity is made, has the corruption of sin penetrated. But one exception there is. Alone like a block of pure marble, without flaw, without stain, untouched by the flood of universal corruption, Mary has been preserved uncontaminated and pure to furnish the material for the divine masterpiece. God made her immaculate so that she might be the mother undefiled: *mater intemerata.* And when before consenting to the divine motherhood she objects in the name of her purity inviolate and inviolable, she makes herself, and shows herself, worthy of becoming the mother of the holy eternal Priest of God. It is because she is immaculate in her origin and truly virginal at heart that there will be formed of her substance and consecrated in her bosom the Pontiff who must be more beautiful and more pure than the heavens themselves.

In Mary, and through Mary, Christ from the very first instant turns toward the altar of sacrifice. *Corpus aptasti mihi,* said He in the beginning, addressing Himself to His Father. His body, indeed, belongs first of all to the creating Trinity, and it is only just that Jesus should dedicate it to the Trinity. But from Mary, also, He has received this body. When Jesus offers Himself to the Father, His body is

still in Mary's bosom and belongs in a way to her. It is she also who furnished the matter of which this first offering is made; she is its sanctuary and altar. The first transports of Jesus toward the Cross, His priestly adorations, come from the womb of Mary where they were nourished by her blood. The beatings of the priestly heart of Jesus within her were harmonized with the beatings of her own. With all her being and all her life she was in communication with the life of Jesus, Priest and Victim.

What a wealth of mystery and wonders here! Three times a day throughout the length and breadth of the globe the Church rings out their remembrance. Three times a day we recount how the angel came down to announce the great tidings of the coming of the High Priest and Savior; how Mary consented and offered her substance for this first and infinite adoration; how the Word having become man began in Mary His eternal priesthood. Three times a day these wonders are on our lips; but are they also in our hearts; do we dwell on them, do we understand them so well that the words of the Angelus burst forth from our lips as a hymn of glorious praise to Jesus our High Priest, and to Mary the mother of the divine priesthood?

II.

Mary is intentionally associated by Jesus with the two great mysteries wherein He acts officially as

Priest and Victim, the Presentation and the Crucifixion.[1]

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When Jesus comes to the Temple to declare Himself by means of a solemn ceremony the real First Born of humanity, the Victim belonging to the altar, the perfect Host prefigured for ages by provisional offerings, Mary is by His side. It is she who brings Him and offers Him. For century after century the women of Israel had ascended the Temple steps bearing their first born to offer them to God. They were His and must be consecrated to Him: *Omne masculinum adaperiens vulvam, Sanctum Domino vocabitur* (Luke II, 23). But God always resigned His rights; and the women, after having given up their children as victims, made haste to buy them back and take them again as their own. In her turn Mary presents her Son. His rights over this Little One, God will not relinquish. This Child is destined for the altar. Knowing these sacred rights, submissive to the eternal designs, and with a heart truly sacerdotal, Mary gives up her own rights over her Son and resigns Him entirely to the Father to be sacrificed. She ratifies His Passion of which this ceremony is the prophetical forerunner and first prepa-

[1] Here we give little more than a translation of the very expressive words of Pius X, found in his *Encyclical* of the 2d February, 1904, published for the Semi-Centenary of the Definition of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, *Ad . . . Deiparæ non hoc tantum in laude ponendum est quod nascituro . . . unigenito Deo carnis suæ materiam ministravit, qua nimirum saluti hominum compararetur Hostia; verum etiam officium ejusdem hostiæ custodiendæ . . . nutriendæque, atque adeo, stato tempore, sistendæ ad aram.*

ration. Seemingly, like other women, she pays the price and claims her Son for her own; but it is only in appearance. Pledged He remains to future immolation, and is given back to Mary only to be prepared for the altar by her own hand.[1]

The aged prophet Simeon outlines clearly the sacerdotal meaning of this ceremony, when in the name of the Most High he assures Mary that her offering is acceptable. For he says in substance: this Child will be the salvation of Israel and the Gentiles, *Viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum. . . . Lumen ad revelationem gentium;* He will die immolated; and you, His mother, will be stricken through the heart, through your very soul. With Him you will be immolated: *Tuam ipsius animam pertransibit gladius* (Luke II, 35). What a sad prediction, so vague and yet so clear! Some day Jesus will be immolated like those tender lambs whose cries Mary hears from the near-by enclosure; for Simeon has spoken of a sword which shall pierce the mother's very soul in seeing her Son exposed to the cruel blows of His enemies. But beyond this announcement of a violent and cruel death he gave no explanation, leaving the poor mother to fear for her Child, and to suffer in advance all possible forms of death. How sweet, nevertheless, for the sacerdotal heart of Mary was this prophecy which told her that she would suffer with Jesus, Priest and Victim. While He dies

[1] Cf. Olier, *Explication des Cérémonies de la Grand'messe,* Liv. VI, Chap. II. Cf. also, Bossuet, the two sermons for the "Feast of the Purification," chiefly the first one. In the English adaptation of the sermons of Bossuet on "Mary," under the title *Devotion to the Blessed Virgin,* London, 1903, see pp. 106-110.

on the Cross, she will be there, dying in soul, associated with the infinite sacrifice, as though struck down on the same altar and with the same sword. What a beautiful fate is thine, O Mary! To be the Virgin Victim as thou art the Virgin Priest with Jesus!

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Associated with Jesus in the first official offering of Him as a victim, Mary is joined to Him also in the supreme act of sacrifice on Calvary.

To avoid all danger of misconception as to what is said here regarding the Virgin Mary, it may be well to state immediately that Jesus alone is the priest of the altar of the Cross. Only He can be the priest of this sacrifice, which consists in giving up His life into the hands of His Father, when as God He could have escaped death. We must be chiefly on our guard against the untheological exaggerations of those who say that Mary, by the very fact that she consented to the Savior's death, was truly a priest with Him on Calvary.[1] She was not and could not have been truly or essentially a priest at the time; though, however, by her consent to the Passion, by her presence at the foot of the Cross and her spiritual immolation in union with her Son, she was then consummating her intimate relations with Jesus, Priest and Victim.

During her whole life Mary had ever the sacrificial

[1] See f. i., Lépicier, *Tr. de B. Virgine Maria*, Paris, 1904, p. 536.

altar before her eyes, and had prepared herself for it. When the appointed hour is at last come and the Lamb is ready, she renews her consent to the immolation. In one of the Mystery Plays of the Middle Ages,[1] the author expresses in moving and elevated style what might have been the last meeting between Jesus and Mary before the Passion. Jesus is represented as asking permission to go to die; Mary, with a mother's grief, beseeches Him not to leave her yet; but immediately, with the self-sacrificing spirit of a priest, she encourages her Son to proceed bravely to the altar since the hour has come. Better perhaps than in this old Mystery Play can we see the true feelings of a mother's sacerdotal heart in the following true scene of heroic immolation. To answer the divine call a priest was about to leave for the Missions of Oceanica; but to spare his own heart and the heart of his aged mother who lived with him, he had resolved to set out without revealing the sorrowful project to her. It was all in vain. Apprised at the last moment of his intentions, she hurried to the station, and there, with tearful eyes, she stretched her arms toward her son as if to win him back to herself and prevent him from making the great sacrifice. For a while they gazed at each other in silence. At last, making a supreme appeal to the faith of his mother the son cried: "Tell me to stay with you and I will not go away." All depends on her now. But faith is stronger than love; and without a moment's hesitation she answers: "You are a priest, my son, you are a priest, and who am I to oppose the rights

[1] *Le Vray Mystère de la Passion,* by Arnoul Breban.

of God? Go, go whither He calls you." [1] This sublime cry of a Christian mother sounds like a faithful echo of the feelings of Mary when she gave up Jesus to the Cross. "You are the Priest of the Most High, go, go to the Altar." She has consented; He goes; but the grandeur of this parting who can portray? We perceive something of its beauty in the well-known painting by Plockhorst. It represents Jesus in the act of embracing His mother before going to His Passion. But His eyes, avoiding the sorrow in Mary's gaze, look upward to where the Father awaits His immolation; Mary, pale and utterly depressed, kisses her Son with a transport of sorrowing affection and ardent devotion; never did she love Jesus as she loves Him now. But never did she sacrifice Him as she does in this hour; for not only does she consent to His death, but, in her love, she wants to assist at it and be united there with her Son. For her also the hour is come.

Now is realized Simeon's prophecy: *Tuam ipsius animam pertransibit gladius.* And these inspired words show us better than aught else Mary's place and part on Calvary. She is there as a victim united with Jesus. She suffers, she dies in her Son. *Divini sacrificii socia* are the words applied to her by Pius IX in his letter to the author of *Marie et le Sacerdoce.* United in the same religious homage toward the Father and in the same love for us, of one soul, so to speak, the mother and the Son are offered in the same immolation: *Hæc in sanguine cordis, hic*

[1] Cf. *Les Tongas et le R. P. J. Chevron, S. M.,* by Monfat, S. M., Lyon, 1893, pp. 85-90.

in sanguine carnis.[1] And this *Compassion* of the mother gives to the *Passion* of the Son its supreme finish of tender attractiveness. How sweet, indeed, and consoling for us to see Mary ever, but especially on Calvary, at Jesus' side; the mother of mercy by the side of the merciful Savior, the Co-Redeemer with the Redeemer!

It is, indeed, at Calvary that Mary becomes fully our Co-Redeemer and our mother. To save us and bring us forth to a divine life she consents to be united with the death of her Son. And, from the summit of the Cross, Jesus Himself seems to declare this spiritual motherhood officially, when, looking toward St. John, He says to Mary, "Behold thy son," and to St. John, "Behold thy mother." True, indeed, it was only about the twelfth century that these words began to be taken in a spiritual sense. The Fathers had accepted them only in their literal sense as the giving to Mary of a companion who would take the place of Jesus.[2] But in the course of ages the piety of the Church gave these texts their full meaning. It is hardly conceivable that Jesus would interrupt His solemn act of sacrifice and adoration simply to fulfil a duty of filial piety. Speaking from the altar He speaks only as a priest. Mary stands at the foot of the Cross as His mother, indeed,

[1] Arnauld of Chartres, *De Laudibus B. M. V.* Cf. chiefly the two sermons of Bossuet on the "Compassion of the Blessed Virgin Mary." Cf. also Bossuet, *Panégyrique de St. Jean.* In the English adaptation of Bossuet, already quoted, cf. pp. 111-131. Cf. Faber, *At the Foot of the Cross,* Chap. V, VI, VII.

[2] Knabenbauer, *Comment. in Evang. secundum Joannem,* Paris, 1900, p. 558.

but as a sacerdotal mother, associated with Him in His immolation for religion and for the salvation of mankind. There she definitely obtains the title of Co-Redeemer with Him, and mother of souls. If we admit that through the centuries the piety of the Church has more and more penetrated Mary's greatness as well as her part in the divine plan, is it not natural, also, that, under the influence of the same piety, the Church in the last centuries should have grasped better the complete bearing of the words which Jesus addressed to His mother at the very moment when she was so intimately connected with Him in the realization of that plan? Thus, not only through Mary's presence and her immolation at Calvary, but also through the very words addressed to her from the Cross, we recognize her as our spiritual mother united in a priestly association with Christ.

Another scene from Calvary consummates the immolation of Mary and throws into clearer light the consequences of her priestly Co-Redemption. The body of Jesus, taken down from the Cross, reposes on her bosom. He belongs to her. All the satisfaction and all the merits of the Cross are now in her hands, and she will henceforth be their dispenser. By this privilege, Mary will be throughout future ages the true *Virgo Sacerdos*, *Virgo sacra dans*, having the glorious intercessory right to obtain from her Son the fruit of Calvary to bestow it on her clients unto the end of time.

III.

Mary, in the mysteries of the Incarnation, Presen-

tation and Compassion, is the model of our priesthood.

Pius IX, writing to the author of *Marie et le Sacerdoce*, congratulates him "on having sought to place Mary before the pious faithful, and especially before the clergy, both as a model to be imitated in preference to all others, and, above all, as a companion of the divine sacrifice, *ut divini sacrificii sociam.*" "Especially before the clergy" are the significant words of the Holy Father. Devotion to Mary should indeed belong to our very state. Can we love our priesthood without loving its mother? It would even seem that when Jesus gave Mary as a mother to St. John, He saw in the latter the whole Christian family, but more especially the priests. To Christ's mother John was given as another Christ. And the Gospel narrative tells us that the Beloved disciple "took her for his own." With John, we also should take Mary as our own, as the mother and model of our priesthood. Let us behold her, then, in the threefold sacerdotal mystery of her life that we may learn from her the duties of our priesthood.

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First of all, the Virgin Priest of the Incarnation through her words, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord," teaches us that by accepting the priesthood we have promised an obedience more perfect than the obedience of the ordinary Christian. Our entire and continual service is required. *Dominus pars*, etc. *Deo perpetuo mancipari.* Again, we do not, as a rule, pay sufficient attention to the sacerdotal mean-

ing underlying the words which made Mary the mother of God and the Virgin Priest; "Behold the handmaid of the Lord"—"be it done to me according to thy word." Is not this the language of submissive adoring religion, carried even unto immolation? Do not these words fit in admirably with the first sentiment of Jesus, who, from the womb of Mary, the most beautiful of sanctuaries and the purest of altars, offers Himself to be the destined Victim: "Behold I come to do thy will"?

Like Mary, the more exclusively we are given to the service of God, the more truly shall we be priests. Mary is the mother of God, but she is not dazzled by her glorious title. Elevated so far above angels and men, even to the very confines of divinity, she ever looks down to the place far below which she thinks best fits her, which alone she loves and looks for, the place of a servant: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." Our priesthood likewise has ennobled us only to make us in a truer sense the servants of God: *ut sint mei religione perpetua.* During life we must be closely bound to God, perpetually chained, as it were, to the altar. Would that we could understand this better! May Jesus grant to all His priests to grasp fully, and realize effectually in their lives, His own generous obedience, together with Mary's sacrificing humility, and lastly, the perpetual service which they owe to God.

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The Virgin Priest of the Presentation shows us that our priesthood has vowed us to a life of immola-

tion with Jesus. The relations of Mary with the priesthood of Our Lord bring immolation naturally to our minds: she is the Virgin Priest only because she is the Virgin Victim. We are priests of Jesus only because we were destined to become victims with Him. Our rightful place is at the altar; there also is our happiness and our glory. On the altar with Jesus, then, we must place ourselves, pierced with the same sword, as one and the same victim composed of the head with the members: *tuam ipsius animam pertransibit gladius.*

In the ordinary life of the priest, this union of inner immolation with Jesus is effected by the effort, always more or less laborious, to pray and to work; by bearing with contradiction and isolation; by being patient with our incapacity and lack of success, with our own faults as well as the faults of our brethren; by vigilance in the daily struggle, so sorrowful at times, to preserve our souls pure and above the things of earth.

In certain extraordinary circumstances this union of immolation will be imposed more manifestly upon us and brought home more forcibly to us. "Behold this child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted; and thy own soul a sword shall pierce. . . ." (Luke II, 34, 35.) According to the original text, Jesus is to be the sign or target against which all in their envy will launch their darts. To-day, as through the ages, it is Jesus, and Jesus alone, who is the mark or object of the envenomed hatred of the wicked. And to-day, if the priest is perse-

cuted, it is because he is marked with the sign of Jesus and thus becomes another Christ. Why should he wonder, then, that the world hates him and would destroy him? The real target of every persecution, consciously or unconsciously, is not the person of the priest, but his supernatural character, the stamp left on him by Christ. Ever living in the priest, Jesus is ever persecuted in the priest. "Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake" (Matt. V, 11). Fortunate are they, indeed, who are calumniated, who are cursed, and who are persecuted, not only for the name of Jesus and because they are Christians, but especially because they bear His priestly character, because they are other Christs! They are the chosen ones among the elect of the altar; they are more Christ-like, being more united to Christ's immolation. Well may their brethren in the holy priesthood, who live in peace, envy them their glorious share in the fulfilment of the prophecy, first heard by the Virgin Priest and Victim: "And thy own soul a sword shall pierce."

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* *

The Virgin Priest of the Compassion standing at the foot of the Cross represents the mystical body, the Church, uniting itself with the sacrifice of its head. Immolated as she was in soul, Mary teaches us that immolation of spirit by which our souls are offered on the altar in adoration and expiation.

Having become our Co-Redeemer and our spiritual

mother through her immolation with Jesus, she teaches us that it is only through the altar that the priest can become the father and savior of souls.

Lastly, Mary teaches us the spirit, the method, of a truly sacerdotal Communion. After Jesus is taken down from the Cross, Mary, supporting the precious burden on her knees and arms, in broken-hearted silence, with her eyes fixed on the holy Victim, seems now to prolong the sacrifice through her own mystical immolation. Jesus suffers no more; Mary's sufferings are intensified as she gazes on the broken, disfigured features of her Child; and this suffering, penetrated by the virtue of the real Victim, is exalted almost to the infinitely high plane of the Cross. This, then, is the ideal model for the priest after he has partaken of the Body and Blood of the Victim. As Mary, with Jesus on her bosom, prolongs the Crucifixion, so, our thanksgiving, with Jesus still within us, should continue the Eucharistic sacrifice. During the precious moments when Jesus is resting in our hearts, just as He reclined in the arms of His mother, we should strive to saturate our whole life with His spirit of immolation. Our work, our plans for the betterment of the souls confided to us, our prayers, our trials interior and exterior, in a word, all those things of which the daily life of the priest is made up, should be brought, during the time devoted to thanksgiving, into close touch with the holy Victim, and this in such a manner that together with Jesus we make but one victim and one sacrifice: we working, praying, suffering; Jesus ele-

vating our work, our prayers, our sufferings to the infinite adoration and expiation of the Cross.

Dux est Virgo Sacerdos,
Fas sit quo properat sequi.[1]

[1] *Officia propria S. Sulpicii:* "Feast of the Presentation of the B. V. M."; "Hymn of Vespers."

CHAPTER IV.

Ecce Venio.

The whole life of Jesus is set toward the altar of the Cross.

Jesus merited for us with an incomprehensible prodigality. Since the Person of the Word, by virtue of the Hypostatic Union, made every act of Jesus His own, and therefore divine, the very least of His free acts had a value infinite in itself. And how these acts were multiplied from the first moment of His conception! But God, in arranging the conditions of our salvation, had determined that the price to be paid for our redemption should be nothing less than the bloody sacrifice of the Cross. The motives of such a divine disposition are not easily discovered. Various reasons are assigned by different authors for this act of God. It may have been to manifest more vividly His merciful love for us, or to reveal to us the value and dignity of the human soul, or to show us the fundamental malice of sin,—deicide,—or to teach us efficaciously the necessity of accepting suffering and humiliation, or lastly, to connect the act of salvation with the supreme act of worship.[1] But whether we are ready to accept some,

[1] Cf. Bossuet, *1er et 2e Sermons pour le Vendredi Saint.* Cf. Prat, *Théologie de St. Paul,* II p., Paris, 1912, pp. 275-277. Cf. Newman, *Discourses to Mixed Congregations,* 15th and 16th Discourses.

or all, or none of these motives, the fact remains that God decided that we should not be redeemed but by the death on the Cross. Accordingly, all the other meritorious acts of Jesus are bound up with His death, forming with it the complete price of our redemption.

Apart from this eternal disposition of the Father, the life of our Savior is attached to the sacrifice of the Cross by another and more intimate bond. Priest as He was, and entirely and only a priest, His every action from the very first moment of His existence was colored by His future sacrifice. His whole life was set toward the altar. In that life religion is not so much a distinct virtue as the attitude, the setting, of all the virtues and of the very soul itself. From the first instant of His life, Jesus has offered Himself to be immolated; He is already immolated in spirit: *Jugis amor sine cæde mactat.* Nay more, Son of the living God as He was and eternal by nature, having clothed Himself with our mortality, and thus having chosen freely the road to death, He seems to us now to pour out drop by drop in a prolonged libation that Life which one day He will entirely sacrifice.

We do not, however, like many writers on the priesthood,[1] profess to see a true sacrifice, or at least, the oblation or first essential element of the total

[1] See f. i. Thomassin, o. c., Lib. X, Chap. IX, n. 18; Condren, *L'Idée du sacrifice et du sacerdoce de N. S. J. C.*, Ed. of 1725, 2e p., Chap. II, III, IV, V, in English adaptation, *The Eternal Sacrifice*, London, 1906, pp. 65-104; Lepin, *L'Idée du sacrif. dans la religion chrét.*, III p., Chap. I, pp. 87-128. Giraud, *Jesus Christ—Priest and Victim*, London, 1913, Vol. I, Chap. XI.

sacrifice of Jesus, in the Incarnation and in the mysteries of the hidden or public life. We wish to remain on the solid ground of strict theology, which places the true and total sacrifice of Christ in the death on the Cross. Our intention here is simply to show that, from the beginning, the whole life of Jesus was ordained to the Cross, and that the sojourn of Christ among us, always so magnificent, so striking, takes on a new beauty, a new grandeur, when seen in the reflection of the light that falls from Calvary.

Undreamed of splendors gleam from the pages of the Gospel when viewed in this light. Our aim, however, is not to write a series of sacerdotal meditations on the life of Christ.[1] We must be satisfied with a brief glance at the main mysteries of that life wherein sacerdotal traits may be discovered, from the first moment of Christ's existence in the womb of Mary to His prayer in the Garden of Olives. It is a sketch, dimly outlined, of some of the many scenes of the hidden or of the public life, with a practical conclusion suggested here and there in passing—our scope does not allow more: but this will suffice to show how from His first entrance into the world, our Savior is the Priest ever moving toward the altar, and the Lamb of God who takes on Himself the sins of mankind.

I.

The key to the life, or rather to the activity, of

[1] There are many books written on this subject. Cf. f. i., Bossuet, *Elévations sur les Mystères;* also, *Méditations sur l'Evangile;* Gay, *Elévations sur la Vie et la Doctrine de N. S. J. C.;* Faber, *Bethlehem* and *The Foot of the Cross.* Giraud, *Jesus Christ—Priest and Victim,* etc.

Jesus while He was still in Mary's womb, may be obtained from the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews: *Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not: but a body thou hast fitted to me: Holocausts for sin did not please thee. Then said I: Behold I come* (Heb. X, 5-7). These words, taken from a Messianic Psalm, are ascribed by St. Paul to Our Lord Himself. The Savior is not yet born into the world, but we see Him begin His mission. Already, He takes the place of the world's rejected sacrifices and becomes Himself the real sacrifice of sinful mankind. "His soul indeed," to quote the words of Bérulle, "was at this moment, and forever after, active, and doing wonderful things. He sees the earth covered with sin, and with sinners who stood in need of a deluge of blood to wash away their offences. He sees that this great work is reserved for Him. He recognizes, accepts, and adores the designs of the eternal Father in His regard, the reasons why He was sent on earth, the work and mysteries which He must accomplish, the abasement in which He must live, the Cross on which He must die. And He offers Himself as a perpetual victim, for the glory of His Father, for the wiping out of sin and for the salvation of men." [1]

In the Circumcision we see Jesus accept in His pure flesh the stigma of sin in order to draw nearer to and to be made like unto sinners, His brethren. Through that sacred rite He offers up the first drops

[1] Bérulle, *Discours de l'Etat et des Grandeurs de Jésus*, p. II, Chap. I.

of His blood in order to merit the great name of Savior. "Jesus," says Bossuet, "is willing to be ranked as a sinner; He consents to bear on His flesh, like a vile slave, the character of servitude and the mark of original sin. Behold Him, in appearance just a son of Adam like all others. . . . He receives the name of Jesus or Savior; our Savior He can be only through His blood; and the very securing of the name must cost Him blood. The little He now gives, pledges all the rest to God: it is the beginning of our redemption." [1]

On the fortieth day after His birth, Jesus is brought to the Temple, there to renew visibly the first offering made in Mary's womb, and to deliver Himself to the Father as something entirely belonging to Him. To quote again the words of Bossuet: "Jesus coming into the world offered Himself as a victim for the human race. But what He had done in secret from the first moment of His life, He now declares in a solemn manner by presenting Himself at God's altar. . . . Jesus presents Himself before His Father to ask for his Cross. . . . He enters His Temple to-day, not to be seen in His majesty as the God there adored, but to take the place of all the victims there destined for sacrifice; as yet He does not receive the blow of death, but He accepts it; there He prepares Himself for it; there He dedicates Himself to

[1] Bossuet, *Elévations sur les Mystères*, XVIIe sem., 1e élév. Cf. Id., *Premier Sermon sur le Mystère de la Nativité de N. S.; Premier Sermon pour la Circoncision de N. S.*

it: this is the entire mystery of the feast."[1]

To Mary's mind, informed from on high of all that was to come to pass, and made more watchful by the prophecy of Simeon, how clearly some incidents in the life of Jesus must have brought up, all at once, premature visions of death and sacrifice! What emotion in the hearts of both when the Child goes for the first time to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover! What anguish for the mother to find on the way home that Jesus is missing! Even in the seclusion of Nazareth, every word, every gesture, everything that concerns Him, no matter how small, brings sad fears and sorrowful visions before her mind. What dark forebodings were hers as she looked on her Child asleep or awake, at work or at play! How the knowledge of what was to come, rushing upon her with all its deadly force, must at times have crushed her almost to the earth! It is some such scene as this that is powerfully portrayed by Holman Hunt in his picture, "The Shadow of Death." Christ, made man, handles the saw and the plane in a poor shop. Around His loins, in Eastern fashion, is wound a girdle, over which falls His flowing tunic. He suspends His labor for a moment, and, drawing Himself to His full height, breathes deeply the evening air. At the same time He extends His tired arms. The light, striking full on His breast, casts His shadow on the white wall where, at the height of his head, hang some carpenter's tools on a horizontal piece of

[1] Bossuet, *1er Sermon pour la Purification de la S. V.* Cf. idem, *Elévations sur les Mystères,* XVIIIe sem., 2e élév.

wood. This shadow of a naked body with the arms extended, thrown on a transversal bar which itself shows dark against the wall, produces the illusion of a man hanging on a cross. A little to the side, between Christ and the shadow, the Virgin, with one knee on the ground, gazes on the prophetic image. Her face is hidden, but her utterly dejected form betrays her emotion. The arms of Jesus are about to fall to His side; He is going to bend again over His work; the material shadow of death will pass. But the vision will remain forever in Mary's heart. "Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart" (Luke II, 19, 51).

II.

In His first public manifestation, Jesus is pointed out as the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world: "The next day John saw Jesus coming to him, and he saith: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who taketh away the sin of the world" (John I, 29). How true were these words of John presenting our Savior to the Jews as the victim who was to be struck down for the sins of the world! Jesus was indeed the Just One foretold by the Prophet Isaias, He was the victim who was to bear the sins of all, and who was to be led one day, docile and silent, like a lamb, to the slaughter. Already, through His supernatural science, He saw the sins of the world; they crushed Him to the ground; they took possession of His thought and filled with anguish His heart. And out of the crowd of Jews that surrounded John when he bore his first testimony to Jesus, we are not told

that even one arose to greet the Savior of the human race. Yet, they had come to John for the baptism of purification; but it was only an easy, exterior purification they sought. Not one of them felt the need, or knew aught, of that baptism by which the soul is washed in the blood of the Lamb. Again, on the next day, John bore fresh testimony of Jesus: "John stood, and two of his disciples. And beholding Jesus walking he saith: Behold the Lamb of God. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus" (John I, 35, 36, 37). This time the words of John the Baptist fell on comprehending ears, for the two disciples understood, and followed Jesus. The name of one we know: it was Andrew. And it is almost certain that the other was John the Beloved disciple. They were two future priests. And here we witness the first meeting of Jesus with these chosen souls; here we see the dawn of the priestly vocation. And what was it that first attracted them to Jesus? Assuredly it was nothing less than His title of universal victim. Unconsciously they are drawn to Him by a supernatural instinct, and they follow the Lamb whose blood will purify; they go with Christ whose unction will some day be spread on their souls. In this same way will the mystery of sacerdotal vocations be perpetuated. In the future those will truly be called to the altar who come to Jesus, the Lamb, the Anointed One of God, drawn by the need of perfect purity, perfect consecration, and by the desire to immolate the Victim who takes away the sins of the world.

The direct ministry of our Savior seems to have been confined to the formation of the Apostles, the first priests. The supreme High Priest was interested almost exclusively in preparing for Himself worthy vicars. Many of His teachings, accordingly, do not obtain their full meaning and practical bearing when applied outside the priestly state: this we may see if we bring back to mind His discourse after the Last Supper.

During this training the thought that He must die is often on the Savior's lips. In the most solemn circumstances, when He tells the Apostles about their high vocation and about the founding of the Kingdom, Jesus expressly and insistently evokes the vision of His death. After Peter had confessed the Savior's divine Sonship and He Himself had promised to build His Church on the Apostle, "Jesus began to show to his disciples, that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the ancients and scribes and chief-priests, and be put to death" (Matt. XVI, 16-21). After He had called the rich young man who refused to follow Him, and after He had recounted the rewards awaiting, even in this world, those who will give up everything for His sake, Jesus commences to speak again of His Passion, He announces to the twelve how in Jerusalem the Son of Man will be delivered to the Gentiles, mocked, scourged, and at last put to death (Luke XVIII, 31-33). Especially worthy of mention are the words related by St. John and pronounced by Our Lord on the occasion of the visit of some Gentiles—forerunners of the future converts—who had applied

to the Apostles and asked to see Jesus: "But Jesus answered them, saying: The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified. Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die; itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Under this allegory Jesus describes the fruits of life which will spring from His death; but this consoling vision does not prevent the natural fear of suffering; and now, just as in His agony in Gethsemani, Jesus allows His soul to feel hesitation and to be troubled. Immediately, however, for the glory of the Father He accepts His hour of sorrow with a kind of enthusiastic exaltation: "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. *But for this cause I came unto this hour.* Father, glorify thy name. . . . And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself" (John XII, 20-32).

Again, otherwise so calm, so self-controlled, He seems to be carried away by the ardor of His desire when He speaks of the hour destined for the fulfilment of His mission: "And I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized: and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?" (Luke XII, 50.) "With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you, before I suffer" (Luke XXII, 15).

Lastly, we come to the prayers of the Savior. Uttered at various times during His public life, we consider them here only inasmuch as they are connected with His priesthood and sacrifice. On at least

five different occasions when the evangelists show us Jesus in prayer, we find in this act of religion some relation with His sacerdotal mission and character.

"And it came to pass in those days," writes St. Luke, "that he went out into a mountain to pray, and he passed the whole night in the prayer of God" (Luke VI, 12). Thus we read, and there comes before us the touching picture of Jesus, the High Priest, alone on the mountain in divine isolation amid the majestic shadows of night, His arms extended, His eyes raised to the heavens, in the attitude of sublime prayer. And what did He ask in this prayer? We may easily infer from the words that follow: "And when the day was come, he called unto him his disciples; and he chose twelve of them (whom also he named Apostles)" (Luke VI, 12-13). Here we have the answer. In the intention of the evangelist evidently, the night spent in prayer and the choosing of the twelve are intimately connected. Jesus had prayed for the first twelve priests and also for all those future priests whom He should call "to be with Him" in the ministry of religion and the apostolate (Mark III, 13, 14, 15).

Before the Transfiguration, also, He prayed; and His prayer was closely associated with thoughts of sacrifice. The Transfiguration itself was a scene of splendor and brightness, but it did not lack a somber setting. For we are told that Moses and Elias appeared by the side of Jesus, speaking with Him of His death and sacrifice, prefigured by the Law and foretold by the Prophets: "And they spoke of his

decease that he should accomplish in Jerusalem" (Luke IX, 28-31).

St. Luke relates another instance in which Jesus seems to have been praying as a priest, as the minister of the true adoration, as "The Perfect Religious of the Father." "And it came to pass that as he was in a certain place praying, when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him: Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said to them: When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be Thy name . . ." (Luke XI, 1-4). The future priests have seen and admired the True Priest in the beauty of His sublime prayer. They wish to learn from Him the science whose practice will be the duty of their state, *their office*, the very science of prayer—"Lord, teach us to pray." And Jesus reveals to them the heavenly formula in which are summarized the most high and most loving dispositions of the religious soul toward God, and the deepest and most universal needs of our poor human nature; the formula whose full truth and efficiency are realized only in the prayer and by the merits of Jesus, Priest and Victim.

More clearly still is the connection between His prayer and His sacrifice brought out by Jesus in what is commonly called "the Priestly Prayer." It takes up the entire seventeenth chapter of the Gospel of St. John. It was given forth by Christ just after the first ordination and on the eve of His sacrifice. The opening words, solemn and sublime, mark it out for special consideration. "Lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said: Father, the hour is come, glorify

thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee . . ." (John XVII, 1). "This prayer," to quote the words of Bossuet, "is, as it were, the canon, or, to speak more fittingly of its author, the express and solemn prayer which should accompany the sacrifice of Jesus. The disposition of His heart, as expressed by the requests that He now makes to His Father, will inspire Him during the whole course of His Passion up to His death: it is the very soul of His sacrifice. Let us be attentive, then, to this prayer which comprises in itself all the virtue of the sacrifice of the Cross, and contains above all the consecration which Jesus made of Himself on the Cross." [1] Let us add to the words of Bossuet the wish that we may endeavor to realize more and more the great part which we, as priests, have in that prayer.

Finally, the prayer of Jesus three times repeated when He lay prostrate in His agony in the Garden of Gethsemani, was an acceptance of His sacrifice: "He fell upon his face, praying, and saying: My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. . . . Again the second time, he went and prayed saying: My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, thy will be done. . . . He prayed the third time, saying the self-same word" (Matt. XXVI, 39-44). "Thy will be done": the supreme prayer of our Priest is one with His first oblation: "Behold I come . . . that I should do thy will, O God" (Heb. X, 7). May the last word

[1] Bossuet, *Méditations sur l'Evangile,* La Cène, 2e p., 34e jour.

of our prayer, also, and the guiding principle of our lives be inspired by the humble resignation of Jesus to the will of the Father. In soul and body, in desolation and sorrow, even in the drinking of the bitter chalice, may our final words be, as we look up to the Father: "Thy will be done."

CHAPTER V.

Priest and Victim.

Freely and lovingly Christ on the altar of the Cross offers His life in sacrifice to His Father.

Venit hora: At last the hour of sacrifice has come. Judas and his armed bands overrun the Garden of Olives. Jesus is "betrayed into the hands of sinners" (Mark XIV, 41). From court to court, from ignominy to ignominy He will be dragged, and at length He will be led to the Cross. And yet, it is Jesus Himself who goes to this Cross as a priest to the altar. There, raised between heaven and earth, His arms extended in infinite supplication, freely and lovingly He will offer up to the Father the sacrifice of salvation.

His divine consecration we have seen; on His way to the altar we have followed Him. There remains for us to contemplate the holy dispositions of His heart when as Priest and Victim He offered Himself in sacrifice.

But, considering the denials made by a certain critic, it may be well, before going any further, to assure ourselves that the idea of a sacrificial death was a real part of the divine message of Jesus, or, in other words, that He believed Himself sent as a priest and victim for the sacrifice of the Cross.

I.

It is hardly necessary to state here—for it is well known—that Liberal Protestants and Modernists, in their efforts to show that between the Catholic Church and the historic Jesus there is a chasm which cannot be bridged over, make the dogma of a redeeming sacrifice their principal battle ground.

This dogma they attempt to explain, without Christ, in various ingenious ways.

To Paul, the converted Jew, saturated with the traditions of the Law and haunted by memories of ancient bloody expiations, some would attribute, if not the first concept, at least the organization of the dogma of the sacrifice of the Cross.[1]

But finding this dogma already developed in the faith and practice of the infant Church, outside St. Paul's sphere of influence and even before his conversion, many critics, as Jülicher, Spitta, Hoffmann, J. Réville, have essayed to find its origin in the religious conscience of the very first Christian generation. Influenced by their regrets and hopes, the Apostles themselves, they say, mistook Christ's meaning and failed especially to reach the true sense of the farewell feast and the last words spoken by Christ on the eve of His death.[2]

Last of all, in their most recent theory, or rather, tendency, liberal critics, though admitting the elab-

[1] Cf. Toy, *Judaism and Christianity*, 1892, pp. 226-233; 290. Loisy, *The Gospel and the Church*, 1904, p. 47; and chiefly, Loisy, *Les Evangiles Synoptiques*, 1907, 1908; I, Introd., pp. 100, 116, 117; II, pp. 531-541.

[2] See a brief exposé of these systems in Rauschen, *Eucharist and Penance*, St. Louis, 1913, pp. 44-62.

oration of this dogma in the apostolic age, would look further back to discover its first origin. They appeal to some kind of mystic syncretism which, penetrating the latter Jewish generations, would have influenced, not only the Apostles, but, perhaps, Christ Himself, leading Him to conceive and to preach a Messiahship of suffering and redemption.[1]

But built as they are on the shifting sands of gratuitous hypotheses and subjective apriorism, these theories cannot stand against the force of historical facts.

In vain have these critics sought the *natural explanation* of the dogma of redemptive salvation after the time of Christ. Further and further back are they forced to go until finally they are driven to Christ Himself. But rather than rest in Him and recognize in Him the supernatural revealer and the divine agent of the mystery of Redemption, passing over Him and His time, with one bound they throw themselves into the preceding period. But, as independent as well as Catholic scholars easily prove, history which forced these denying critics to go back ever further and further until they reached Christ, now constrains them to move forward again little by little until they finally descend to Christ. There history holds them face to face with the UNDENIABLE FACT that Jesus Himself, correcting and reversing the earthly Jewish hopes of a glorious Messianism, affirmed that He came to die

[1] See f. i., Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums*, 1903. Harnack, *Lukas der Arzt, Luke the Physician*, 1906, 1907, Introd. and Chap. I.

as a sacrifice for the salvation of the world.[1]

Unmoved, therefore, by the denials of liberal criticism, with the Apostles, with the first Christian generations, with the entire Catholic Church, we hear and firmly believe the affirmation of Christ, that He came to give His life on the Cross for the redemption of mankind.

This affirmation we meet first of all in the preaching of the "Kingdom." The present generation, and with it all other generations, have need of being saved before they can enter the Kingdom. Jesus will be the founder of this new Kingdom inasmuch as He will be the Savior of men by preaching penance to them and by dying for them: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus. For he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. I, 21). Repeating the words of His official precursor, "Jesus began to preach, and to say: Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. IV, 1, 2, 17; Mark I, 14, 15). "And Jesus went about all the cities and towns, . . . preaching the gospel of the kingdom, . . . And seeing the multitudes he had compassion on them: because they were distressed, and lying like sheep that have no shepherd. . . ." (Matt. IX, 35, 36). After complaining of this adulterous and sinful gen-

[1] Against the assumed influence or even existence of a Judeo-Hellenist or Judeo-Persian syncretism, cf. Lagrange, *Le Messianisme chez les Juifs*, Paris, 1909, 3e p., Chap. VII, pp. 236 et seq. Id. in *Diction. Apologét.*, 1914, word "Iran." About the Dogma of the Redemption in St. Paul, cf. Prat, *Théologie de St. Paul*, II, pp. 266-304. About the whole question, cf. Rivière, *The Doctrine of the Atonement—An Historical Essay*, London, 1909, I, Chap. V and VI. Burton, Smith, etc., *Biblical Ideas of Atonement*, Chicago, 1909, pp. 110-144.

eration and of the cities of Galilee "that they had not done penance" Jesus cried out in loving mercy: "Come to me, all you that labor, and are burdened and I will refresh you" (Matt. XI, 16-28). But in order that the people may be drawn to Him, and that they may accept the law of penance—so necessary for the remission of sins and the entering into the Kingdom—Jesus tells them that "the Son of man must suffer many things . . . and be killed" (Mark VIII, 31; Matt. XVI, 21). The Savior came to light the fire of zeal and love upon earth; but to succeed, He Himself must pass through the baptism of blood (Luke XII, 49, 50). He came for the glorious conquest of a new Kingdom, but, as the price of victory and glory, He must suffer and die: "Then he said to them: O foolish, and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory? . . . Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer. . . . And that penance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, unto all nations" (Luke XXIV, 25, 26, 46, 47).

Still more direct and explicit is the same affirmation when, on two solemn occasions, Jesus condenses the message of His death into words which are the living expression of sacrifice.

Provoked by the ambitious request of James and John, who asked for the first places in His Kingdom, Jesus reminds them of the necessity of detachment and humility, of service to others, and finishes by setting before them as motive and example the gift

which He was about to make of His own life, offered up for the redemption of many: "For the Son of man also is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a redemption for many" (Mark X, 45; Matt. XX, 28). Here Jesus clearly expresses the idea of giving His life as a *substitution* or ransom to pay the price of our iniquity and to reconcile us to God: and this is the very idea of sacrifice.[1]

Again, at the Last Supper, the words used by Jesus in the institution of the Eucharist cannot be understood but in the sense of a most real and most perfect sacrifice (Matt. XXVI, 26, 27; Mark XIV, 22-24; Luke XXII, 19, 20; I Cor. XI, 24, 25). Not only does Jesus give us in communion His Body "delivered" for us and His Blood shed for us for the remission of sin; but He points out that His Blood is the seal of the New and Eternal Covenant, as the blood of the ancient sacrifices was the seal of the Old Covenant.[2]

We may notice in all these passages that Jesus does not reason, does not explain: He merely affirms. But His simple affirmation already places His dispositions of Priest and Victim in a wonderful light. Carried away by this mystery of grandeur and love, St. Paul, especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews, concentrates upon it his inspired meditation and opens up for us new vistas of beauty and magnifi-

[1] Cf. Lagrange, *Evangile selon St. Marc,* Paris, 1911, pp. 264-266.

[2] Lagrange, o. c., pp. 353-356. Prat, *Théologie de S. Paul,* I p., pp. 168-172, II p., pp. 379-384. Batiffol, *Eucharistie,* 5th Ed., pp. 90-140.

cence. These splendors of the Gospel, brilliantly intensified by the supreme revelation granted to St. Paul, will lead us to the holy mountain, there to introduce us into the true Holy of Holies, the heart of Jesus, Priest and Victim, at the very moment of His infinite sacrifice.

II.

SACERDOS: A priest He was from the very moment of the Incarnation. But now, when His hour is come, He shows forth in their full glory His priestly traits; more than ever He wishes to bring home to us that He is of our race, our brother in infirmity, called and consecrated for the altar. At this great moment He is condemned to die because He has proclaimed Himself the true Anointed Priest, "the Christ of God."

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It was necessary that He should live encompassed with temptation and suffering in order that He might be more tenderly compassionate toward our miseries and more powerful in His supplication before God (Heb. II, 17, 18; IV, 15). But was He ever more truly the "Man of Sorrows" than when, in the moment of His supreme agony, He felt in His flesh and in His human will all the terror of the torture and ignominy which awaited Him on the morrow; when in His temptation He felt the need, while weeping tears of blood, to cry forth in prayer that His chalice might pass; when in His utter dereliction He desired to confide to us that His soul was sad-

dened unto death by the evil of our sins? (Matt. XXVI, 36-44; Mark XIV, 33-39; Luke XXII, 40-44; Heb. V, 7.)

From the beginning, the Father had called and had consecrated Him. His holy humanity had ever felt, penetrating it like a substantial anointing, the union with the divinity. Gratefully and religiously His humanity had ever abandoned itself to this happy union, proud to be essentially destined for "the things of God," to be from God and for God alone. But if the Hypostatic Union itself could not be more complete, if the fundamental consecration of Jesus could not be more entire, was it not possible, was it not fitting that, at the last solemn moment, the consecrating sacerdotal unction should be more profoundly felt, should become more really vivid in Jesus, and that He should then give Himself up with more complete abandon to God? Listen to His cry before the agony: "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause I came unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name" (John XII, 27, 28). It is the cry of a soul completely consecrated to the priesthood of the Father and intimately feeling that consecration. And the more fully He gives Himself up to the glory of His Father, and the more completely He declares Himself ready to obey even unto death, the more complacently does the Father, bending over Him, recognize and proclaim Him in the eternal Sanctuary as His Son and His Priest forever (Heb. V, 5, 9).

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This divine Filiation and consecration Jesus avows openly before His judges, thus sealing His sentence of death. "I adjure thee by the living God," the high priest says to Him, "that thou tell us if thou be the Christ the Son of God." To this direct adjuration Jesus gives a no less direct and categorical affirmation. And then, and for this, He is declared "guilty of death." "The high-priest rent his garments, saying: He hath blasphemed; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy: what think you? But they answering, said: He is guilty of death" (Matt. XXVI, 63-66; Mark XIV, 61-64). And later, when Pilate openly asserts that he finds "no cause in Him," the Jews only answer: "We have a law; and according to the law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God" (John XIX, 6, 7). He is pronounced worthy of death because He vindicates His divine Sonship, the principle of His vocation and sacerdotal consecration. Thus, the priests of the Law, in refusing to recognize the One for whom they as priests were commissioned to prepare the way, betray their priesthood. Or, rather, Providence, ever acting in mysterious ways, uses these provisional priests, even in the very betrayal of their trust, as the means of access to the true altar for the supreme and eternal Pontiff.

III.

Victima: A victim also He constituted Himself,

and was at heart, from the very first instant when He offered Himself in place of the holocausts without sweetness, and the sin-offerings without expiatory power. In the transport of His soul longing for sacrifice He had cried: "Behold I come" (Heb. X, 10). But this exaltation was now to obtain the end so long and so earnestly desired, the day of Solemn Expiation had arrived, the day for the immolation of the true Paschal Lamb, the day of the holocaust of infinite adoration.

Now He is the "Servant of Yaveh" foreseen by Isaias in his great Messianic prophecy, "The Man of Sorrows" substituted and immolated for the man of sin. "He was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. . . . And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Is. LIII, 5, 6).

Now He is, in very deed, the Lamb of God "who taketh away the sin of the world" (John I, 29-36).

What splendid perspectives opened then before His interior gaze! What raptures of joy in His heart, bruised though it was, as He saw the New Covenant actually sealed with His blood, the Eternal Covenant of perfect satisfaction to the justice of His Father and of redemption for the new people of God, the immense Christian society, the society of the saints!

The SATISFACTION of infinite Justice; the REDEMPTION of a world: no human words can express

better the height and the depth of the dispositions of Jesus as Victim. Necessary, however, it will be to harmonize these formulas with the entirety of Christian dogma. Still more necessary it will be, before applying them to the infinite and mysterious relations of the Father with our Mediator, His Son, to purify these analogical conceptions of all that is essentially imperfect or unbecoming in them as found in the human social relations from which they are necessarily borrowed.

Isolated and pushed to extremes, the idea of *Satisfaction* would approach the concept of a *Substitution purely penal* by virtue of which the innocent Jesus, now considered, so to speak, culpable and accursed, would become in the hour of His Passion, the object of the embittered vengeance of His Father to suffer all the torments of sin—a veritable hell—despair alone excepted.[1]

In humanizing and dramatizing beyond measure the idea of *Redemption*, certain of the Fathers, by their use of metaphorical expressions, would seem to put forward the burlesque theory of a price paid to Satan by the consummation of the sacrifice of the Cross in order to dispossess him of his domain, or to compel him to give up his rights over the human race.[2]

But far higher, far wider, and far worthier of the

[1] Rivière, o. c., pp. 9, 10, gives some exaggerations of this kind borrowed from Bossuet and Bourdaloue. Other instances may be found in the work, otherwise so excellent, of Le Camus, *The Life of Christ*, New York, 1908, III, pp. 280-286, 347, 378.

[2] On this theory of a Bargain Redemption cf. Rivière, o. c., II, Chap. XXII-XXV.

Savior and of His Father are the aims and the dispositions of the victimal heart of Jesus.

Yes; Jesus is indeed the Victim who satisfies divine Justice. But, bent beneath the crushing weight of our crimes, borne down by the shame of condemnation, or shrinking from the terrors of death, He always remains, and He ever feels Himself to be, the well-beloved Son of the Father, the offering of sweetest odor which pleases the Most High. Is it not the Father Himself who has sent Him and given Him to us as a victim, and who, by the very same act which made Him His Son, destined and consecrated Him for the Cross? (John III, 16; I John IV, 9; Rom. V, 8; VIII, 33; Heb. V, 6.)

Yes; Jesus is truly the Victim who *satisfies for us*, suffering and dying to *redeem* us. But this substitution does not mean that our sin and its consequent malediction have been transferred to Christ as to one not belonging to our sinful race, a blameless stranger who would then be arbitrarily chosen as our mediator and sacrificed, as it were, against his will. As described in Holy Scripture and especially in St. Paul, this substitution means that the Father, in His love and wisdom, made Jesus one of us, the first-born of our race, the new Adam, who can be accounted our *Moral Head* and the bearer, accordingly, of all our responsibilities. Through His relationship with us, He becomes, so to speak, jointly liable with us for the sin of the family, while at the same time He remains in His own Person the very Saint of saints. Brother of the offenders, and well-beloved Son of the offended God, He is able and willing through His love

for His brethren, and much more through His love for His Father, to offer Himself as a victim of reparation. To the original disobedience of His race, He has opposed from the very first instant, His loving obedience. And now through love He becomes obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross (Heb. V, 7, 8; X, 7-10; John XIV, 31; XVIII, 11; Rom. V, 19; Philip. II, 8). He *repairs* our sin before God, He *redeems* us from it, not only by obeying for us, by dying for us, but also by making us with Himself obedient to the Father and dead to sin.

This true Substitution we must well understand. Not like the victims of the ancient sacrifice, beings inferior to man, simply substituted for man to symbolize his sentiments of adoration and reparation, is Jesus. Those substitutions were mere symbols or ceremonies and therefore imperfect and provisional: they only announced the true and perfect substitution of the Cross. The perfect substitution for the entire human race is realized in Jesus; for, Himself unstained by sin, He becomes the Head of a fallen and culpable race, and through the law of solidarity voluntarily takes upon Himself to repair the crime of His people. Again, the perfect substitution is realized in Jesus, for He does not die alone on the altar: with Him and in Him there also all those who are to be redeemed from sin die mystically, just as if Jesus in dying had pledged their lives as an offering to God. And this mystical incorporation to the Cross has its realization in each one of us whenever through faith and the sacraments we participate in the virtue of Calvary, as also when we suffer

the mortifications of our daily Christian life. Thus is consummated the mystery of the *Great Substitution:* by our death in Jesus we are redeemed and delivered from sin, we are incorporated with the justice and the glorious Resurrection of our Victim (Rom. VI, 1-11; II Cor. V, 14, 15, 21; Gal. III, 13, 14; V, 24).[1]

What profundity of mystery but also what splendor of light in the theology of the victimal death of our Savior! SATISFACTION, REDEMPTION: how grand, how great these two Christian words! How often repeated, how seldom understood! At times, how narrow, how materialized their meaning on the lips of some; how empty, how vapory in the thought of others! Faithfully, piously, we must preserve them with their true meaning as the watchword of our Catholic faith. Too feeble, indeed, they are—since they are but human—to bring forth the greatness of the underlying thought; but they express less imperfectly than any other word the divine work of justice and love.

In the light of this theology the entire Passion is transfigured. Across the hypocrisy and hate of the trial instigated by the traitor priests, across the horrors of the shameful scourging and ruthless crowning with thorns, across the iniquitous condemnation wrung from the cowardice of Pilate by the clamors of the mob, shine the two great words SATISFACTION, REDEMPTION. And in their radiance of heavenly beauty blazons forth the mutual love of Father

[1] Cf. Rivière, o. c., Chap I. Cf. Id., *Le dogme de la Rédemption—Etude théologique,* Paris, 1914, IIe p., Chap. 3-5. Cf. Prat, *Théologie de St. Paul,* IIe p., pp. 278-302.

and Son, together with their great love for us; the entire harmony of the divine plan restoring a fallen world; all the treasures of obedience, of holiness, and of sanctification enclosed in the heart of Jesus, our Victim.

IV.

Sacerdos et Victima: We have seen the religious dispositions of the true Priest of the Most High when the great hour of His sacrifice had come. We have seen the sublime work of redemption which the holy Victim was ready to accomplish for the love of men and the glory of the Father. Now, going with Him to the Holy Mount and kneeling by His Altar, we contemplate our Priest and Victim while He consummates His sacrifice.

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In the words of St. John we are told that Pilate "delivered him to them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him forth. And bearing his own cross, he went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew Golgotha" (John XIX, 16, 17). For God and for us, more beautiful and more just than Abel, more majestic than Melchisedech, more obedient and more immolated in heart than Isaac, He proceeds to the crowning act of His life.

Out through the city gates, a true victim of Solemn Expiation, they take Him to be immolated, just as their fathers had taken the accursed flesh of the victims sacrificed in the great atonement outside the camp to be burned (Heb. XIII, 11-13; Lev. XVI,

27). But unknown to themselves they were fulfilling ancient prophecies and figures. Outside the Temple, whose altar was but national and provisional, they took Him to the Holy Mount on which the Cross, the Catholic and Eternal Altar, should be raised: *Crux non Templi ara sed Mundi.* (St. Leo, VIII[th] Sermon, *De Passione.*)

On the heights of Calvary the executioners nailed Him to the Cross. "A body thou hast fitted to me. . . . Behold I come" (Heb. X, 5-10). At last He can give His body as a holocaust and victim for sin. At last, with mingled pleasure and pain our Victim can extend Himself on His Altar, giving up, even offering, His hands and His feet while the executioners drive in the nails hard and close. But it is to His Father that He offers His hands, His feet, His body and His entire being. It is love that has brought Him to the altar; it is love that immolates Him there:

Almique membra corporis
Amor sacerdos immolat.[1]

As a priest He gives up for God and for us each drop of His blood, every breath of His life. What a spectacle is here presented before us! Jesus the supreme Pontiff offering Himself, the supreme holy Victim! *Ipse offerens, et ipse oblatio* (St. Aug., *De Civ. Dei,* X, 20). O God! look on Thy Christ, Thy only begotten Son, offering Himself in sacrifice for us, and deign to accept His oblation for our sins: *Respice, Domine, Sancte Pater, de Sanctuario tuo*

[1] *Ordinarium divini officii ad Vesperas, Tempore Paschali.*

. . . *et intuere hanc sacrosanctam hostiam quam tibi offert magnus Pontifex noster, sanctus puer tuus, Dominus Jesus, pro peccatis fratrum suorum* (St. Bernard, *Sermo De Passione Domini*).

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On the Cross Jesus interrupts His silent adoration, or rather, in the very act of sacrifice He reveals to us the innermost nature of His secret homage. Every word He utters is, indeed, the word of a priest and victim. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke XXIII, 34). Victim for all mankind as He was, Jesus begins His intercession by praying for His executioners. The blood of the just Abel, their brother, the responsibility for the shedding of which they had called down openly on their own heads, begins to fall on them, but it descends in merciful forgiving prayer and not in malediction (Matt. XXVII, 35; Heb. XII, 24). Again He speaks: "Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise" (Luke XXIII, 43). The first efficacious application of the fruit of sacrifice, nothing less than the possession of the heritage of the New Testament, is assured to the thief who understands the mystery of the great substitution and unites himself to it in all humility and repentance: "And we indeed (are condemned) justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done no evil" (Luke XXIII, 41). Next, His mother is the theme: "When Jesus therefore had seen his mother and the disciple standing, whom he loved, he saith to his mother: Woman, behold thy son. After

that, he saith to the disciple: Behold thy mother" (John XIX, 26, 27). In this utterance Jesus goes beyond the duty of filial piety. At the very moment when Mary herself gives Him up to death that we might be born to the life of grace; at the moment when, in fulfilment of Simeon's prophecy, her heart is truly pierced with the sharp sword of grief, Jesus has in view for her a new spiritual maternity, the result of her glorious association with Him as Priest and Victim. In the person of St. John He bequeaths to her His mystical body in which He will live again. And now the cry of physical suffering and approaching death breaks sharply on our ears: "I thirst" (John XIX, 28). Each drop of blood He sheds increases the fever, which, like the fire of old, is consuming the sacrifice. The scene changes, He turns from earth to heaven, from man to God. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. XXVII, 46). What mean these saddest of human words? Is this at last the cry of despair or, at least, of supreme helplessness and destitution? Has Jesus lost the feeling of the presence and love of His Father? Oh! assuredly not. It is rather the cry of hope and holy resignation. It is the cry of the Just One, of the only begotten Son, who suffers, but who rests assured, even in death, of His Father's love and protection. These words are taken from the principal Messianic Psalm (XXII, or in Vulgate XXI), wherein are prophetically described, on the one hand, the torments of the Passion, the scorn of His enemies, the bruising of His hands and feet by the nails, the dividing of His garments, and on the other, the intimate sentiments

of the holy Victim. In pronouncing aloud the first verse of this Psalm, Jesus wishes to apply to Himself the entire prophecy and to bring us to reflect on the resignation and confidence which fill His soul. And this the more, since the chief priests, standing at the foot of the Cross, had already in sneering blasphemy turned against Jesus the words of the same Psalm: "He trusted in God; let him now deliver him if he will have him; for he said: I am the Son of God" (Matt. XXVII, 43; Ps. XXI, 9). Jesus replies to the blasphemies by proclaiming Himself the divinely dedicated victim of suffering, who nevertheless, in the midst of His torments and in the very embrace of death, remains confident that He will triumph with His Lord in whose love He shares. "And to him my soul shall live. . . . There shall be declared to the Lord a generation to come; and the heavens shall shew forth his justice to a people that shall be born, which the Lord hath made" (Ps. XXI, 31, 32).[1]

And now the end is near: "It is consummated," the Victim cries (John XIX, 30). The shadows have passed and the reality is here! The figurative sacrifices, the prophecies of suffering, the divine promises, the entire plan of wisdom and love is realized and consummated in the death of Christ.

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"And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said: Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. And saying this, he gave up the Ghost" (Luke XXIII, 46). These final words of Jesus, coming soon after He had

[1] Cf. Lagrange, *Evangile selon St. Marc*, pp. 404-406.

said "it is consummated," are full of meaning. They are, as it were, the closing of the scene; for with them and by them the last act in the infinite and unique drama is perfectly accomplished, and the curtain falls. The executioners have crucified the Son of God. In bitter hate they have done their work, but they have done it well. Their rôle, however, is only material, and the sacrifice is not yet complete. Not to them does it belong to offer up the Victim to whom they have given the death blow, no more than it belonged to the Levites of old or the common people to offer up the sacrifice after they had struck down the oxen in the Temple. For this, one consecrated to God was required. The priest it was who finally offered the sacrifice; he it was who, by collecting, offering, and sprinkling the blood, gave to the otherwise material immolation its essential character. And who is the priest of the great sacrifice on Calvary? It is no less a person than Jesus Christ Himself. For this was He consecrated, for this did He come into the world. He it is who by giving up His life voluntarily, and offering it to the Father, clothes His death with the distinct and essential character of sacrifice. In spite of the terrible torture He had undergone, in spite of His exhausted strength and the almost entire loss of His blood, He could yet, by virtue of His divinity, have resisted and escaped death. The executioners could wound Him, they could tear His body to pieces, but they were powerless to snatch from Him His life. He died only by His wish and according to His own desire. This He had already said: "Therefore doth the Father love me; because I

lay down my life, that I make take it again. No man taketh it away from me: but I lay it down of myself, and I have power to lay it down: and I have power to take it up again" (John X, 17, 18). Freely, then, He opens the door to death, freely He consummates His immolation when He utters the words, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

In time or in eternity, on earth or in heaven, these are the most beautiful, the most fruitful words ever pronounced. Words they are of infinite adoration and expiation; words of universal salvation. And all this they are because they speak of obedience that did not shrink from death, and love which reached heaven. Obedience and love! Or, rather, obedience springing from love! Such is the import of the last words that proceeded from the lips of the Savior. More enduring words could not have been uttered; more noble or more sublime the consummation which they express could not have been. "Therefore doth the Father love me; because I lay down my life" (John X, 17). Love it was that began Jesus' sacrifice; love it is that dominates and attends its consummation. How loving the Son when He surrenders His life to the Father! How loving the Father when He accepts that well-beloved life! How great is the love exemplified in the death of Him who offers Himself for us, and in the Father who for our sake gives His Only-Begotten to the Cross! When the Passion is over, Jesus still insists on manifesting this supreme feature of His sacrifice, the love which has been the soul of all His actions as a Priest and Victim. For He is yet on the Cross, He is yet on the Altar, when the sol-

dier's lance pierces His divine heart, thus showing us that His priesthood has its origin in love, and opening forever to the world the fountains of holiness and love which spring from the infinite sacrifice.

CHAPTER VI.

Juxta Crucem.

A Meditation on the sacrifice of Jesus under the form of a priestly Way of the Cross.

The death of Jesus being above all else a sacrifice, it is as a sacrifice that it should be contemplated. This holds especially true for a priest. To go with Jesus, Priest and Victim, from His condemnation, all through His Passion, down to His burial, cannot help being of profit to the ordinary Christian, even were he to travel this road out of mere curiosity. But for us who must daily ascend the altar what a beautiful Way of the Cross! In piously accompanying Jesus through the list of the Fourteen Stations as they exist to-day nearly everywhere, consecrated as it were by Franciscan influence and enriched with Pontifical Indulgences,[1] the example of the God-Man, at once the Priest and the Victim of His sacrifice, will be brought home to us more intimately, more personally, and, as a natural result, more fruitfully. Entering into our exercises of devotion, that example will at the same time have a profound influence on our lives.

In the following pages we do not intend to propose a *Formulary* to be used or read in the very exercises of the Way of the Cross. We aim only at suggesting a method especially useful for priests

[1] Cf. Thurston, *The Stations of the Cross,* London, Chap. VII and VIII.

when they wish to follow Jesus, the High Priest, step by step on the sad journey of His Passion. The various reflections we propose on each station are only illustrations meant to show how rich and natural is this method.

I. Jesus is condemned to death. He is condemned because He is a priest and a victim. "He hath blasphemed," says Caiphas, the high priest, rending his garments. "He is guilty of death," echo the members of the Sanhedrin. Why? Because He has affirmed that He is "The Christ, the Son of God" (Matt. XXVI, 63-66), the One anointed for the sacrifice. As though receiving His priestly investiture, burning with the infinite desire to make reparation to His Father and to work for our salvation, Jesus accepts the sentence of death. In the accusations put forward by the priests, and in the blasphemy and curses shouted by the people against Him, He hears but the proclamation of the divine act which has officially substituted Him for His sinful brethren. "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas," cry the people in frenzy (Luke XXIII, 18). In vain does Pilate protest, "What evil hath this man done? I find no cause of death in him" (Luke XXIII, 22). They cry out only more madly: "Let Him be crucified." At length Pilate weakens, and, leading Jesus before the Jews, gives Him up to them as the Man, *Ecce Homo*, who must *truly die for all:* "Then . . . he delivered him to them to be crucified" (John XIX, 15-16). In appearance it was the Roman governor who condemned Jesus to

the Cross. In reality it was Jesus who "delivered Himself to them." For He knew well His solidarity with mankind and felt the full weight of the responsibility for his brothers who had sinned. At each new shout of blasphemy, at each homicidal cry, He renewed His offering, realizing more deeply both the evil of our sins and our need of a Savior.

And shall the servant be above the Master? (John XV, 20.) When He, our model, received only reviling and contempt, shall we seek only honors and praise? Nowadays, as a rule, Christians of all denominations venerate our priesthood. Our own people love us, and would, if necessary, as their fathers did of old, die for us. And yet, if we wish to be, and always to act, what we are, men of God, pure and set apart, must we not be ready to sacrifice friendship and respect and to receive in their stead enmity and condemnation? Yes; for the love and glory of our priesthood we are willing to accept such sacrifices. And even if, at times, in certain countries and certain places, the people, suspecting us of all that is bad and accusing us openly or secretly of all that is evil, treat us with contempt and calumny because we are priests, we must see in this only the unconscious acknowledgment of our mission as representatives of Christ. In this bitterness and calumny we must hear only the voice of poor souls crying forth their great need of a priest and victim before God. If we live in these dispositions, the more violently the people cry out against us and curse us, the more vividly shall we feel that we are delegated and necessitated to pray for them, as the great High Priest one day prayed

for those who falsely accused and condemned Him.

II. Jesus carries his Cross. "Then therefore (Pilate) delivered him to them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him forth. And bearing his own cross, he went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew Golgotha" (John XIX, 16, 17). What were the sentiments of Jesus when led before His Cross? Only as a priest did He come into this world, and, consequently, only for the altar—the one end and meaning of the priest—had He lived. At last His holy impatience is satisfied: He beholds the Cross, which is to be His altar. Is our altar for us our very home, the center of our thoughts and affections, our place of refuge and strength? When we kiss it during the Holy Sacrifice, do we remember that the true, the unique altar, is the Cross, the Cross of Jesus, which becomes ours, when we accept and kiss it? O Jesus, the Cross caused Your heart to leap with supernatural joy, but what a sorrowful weight for Your body already so weakened! Onward You go beneath it, silent and gentle, with tottering steps, and bruised shoulders. *Non aperuit os suum* (Is. LIII, 7). O Jesus! keep us from bitterness and complaint beneath the crushing weight of our cross.

III. Jesus falls the first time. The Cross was indeed heavy; the weight of sin and sorrow heavier still: *Dolores nostros ipse portavit* (Isaias LIII, 4). How light-heartedly we carry the burden of our own sins and those of our people! As dispensers

of the Sacrament of Penance, we grow accustomed to the recital of sin and may too easily lose our horror of it. What we frequently hear, be it ever so terrible in itself, is liable in time to be shorn of its terror. But we should ever feel keenly our own miseries and the evil committed, not only by those placed under our care, but by all poor sinners throughout the world.

This fall Jesus could have prevented; for He had at His command the divine power to help His human weakness. He allowed Himself to fall that He might suffer the more, that He might be more outraged, more maltreated; and above all, that He might, as a true victim, adore the majesty of God the more profoundly, and prostrate beneath His persecutor's blows, expiate the more sorrowfully the insults offered to the Almighty.

From this let us learn how to use our faults as stepping stones to humility and hope. Let us learn to be impressed with the prayers of the Mass where we so repeatedly speak of our daily falls. These falls when felt as they ought to be, are indeed fraught with sadness for us, and become in this respect so many stations of our way of the cross; but, confessed in sorrow to Jesus, they are as so many steps on which we ascend the altar of reparation and salvation.

IV. Jesus meets His most blessed Mother. The last phase of the priestly cooperation of Mary opens to our view. As she had carried her well-beloved Son to the Temple and there offered Him to His Father, so, now, she accompanies Him to

the altar to deliver Him up to suffering for God and for us.

O Mary! grant to all Christian mothers a heart like unto your own; obtain for them that they may have the courage to sacrifice their sons, if God so desires, to the altar and the apostolate; and this more especially to-day, when the future in many lands is so menacing for the priest, and when it is at the same time so necessary to fight against the peril of diminishing vocations. May these mothers, after they have given their children to the altar, not claim them back again by attempting to turn the priesthood to their own glory or interest as though it were a family possession. Understanding deeply the honor conferred on the mother of a priest, may they aid him by their prayers. Amid the many supernatural wonders, disclosed only to God and His angels, is there anything more edifying than the spectacle of a mother, who, having given her child to the altar and realizing the sublime mission confided to him, silently prays and offers her life for the sanctification of her son and for his work? Nothing comes closer than this to the ideal of Christian maternity; nothing is more like the maternity of Mary herself. But we priests must also do our part. We must love our parents well enough to dare speak to them supernaturally. We must remind them especially that being now given to God we belong henceforth to Him more than to them: "Did you not know, that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke II, 49). They must sacrifice us to God; and this is the very best means by which they can partake of our sacer-

dotal cross; it is the price which they must pay for the glory of having a son at the altar.

Personally, let us consider Mary more and more as the mother of our priesthood. Reminding her of the rôle she played on Calvary, let us ask her to accompany us and assist us each morning at the altar, so that there, partaking of her saintly dispositions, we may be intimately united, as she was, to Jesus.

Fac ut portem Christi mortem,
Passionis fac consortem,
Donec ego vixero.

V. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry His Cross. Jesus was now so feeble, so utterly spent, that the soldiers, fearing to see Him die before arriving at the place of execution, used the right they had by Roman law to stop a passer-by and requisition him to carry the Cross. Other forces Jesus could have summoned to His aid: for He was the Almighty who sustains the world by His power. This, however, He did not wish to do, in order to show us that, after all, He is only our substitute and that it is we who must bear the cross. He takes it up for us, but at the same time He invites and obliges all to bear their share of the burden, addressing Himself especially to His priests, for they have sought the honor of walking closely by His side. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. XVI, 24). The ordinary Christian cannot travel far through life without meeting the cross; for the cross is always ready and everywhere awaits him (Cf. Imit. of Christ,

Book II, Chap. XII, 4). Is it possible, then, that a priest can be surprised and complain at this law of suffering? Has he forgotten so soon the years spent in generous preparation? Have his dreams of sacrifice already fled like morning mist before the rising sun? Did he not propose himself then as ready and anxious to drink with Jesus the chalice of bitterness? And now he forgets these yearnings for sacrifice; now he desires only the honor of the priesthood, a place of glory and rest at the altar. As a drudge at his task he murmurs against the cross. Did Simon of Cyrene also murmur against the delay caused him and the burden imposed upon him? And, if so, did Jesus, in hearing him thus complain, think of us and suffer anew, as He foresaw our surely more culpable resistance and revolt against the state which not so long ago we assumed willingly, and promised to bear faithfully, with all its trials, to the end of our lives?

Ah! if we only knew the glory and sweetness of the cross. The twelfth chapter of the Second Book of the *Imitation* sings it in a transport of piety. But a single sentence from Saint Paul should appeal more to the heart of the priest than all this enthusiastic, though true, praise. "I, Paul . . . who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for his body, which is the church" (Colos. I, 23, 24). To suffer immolation of the flesh and of the heart for the salvation of souls, to work for the increase and spread of Christ's mystic body, the Church, to continue and to consummate the Passion, the infinite sacrifice—this is our part in the work of

Calvary, greater far than that of the Cyrenian; for it is the part of a priest-vicar of Jesus Christ. But this rôle, noble as it is, we must fulfil with modesty and for Jesus alone. Absurd, indeed, would it have been on Simon's part if he had wished to be thanked, to be honored, because for a few moments he touched and carried the Cross of salvation. And foolish are we in all truth if we seek undue honor in the cross, if we attempt to transfer to us what in no way belongs to us, the glory of the Cross of Christ. O Jesus, save us from this folly! When You deign to associate us with Your Cross for the salvation of souls, may we never seek thereby to be noticed, praised, or loved; may we never strive to attach too exclusively to us any of those souls committed to our care, to fix their attention on us as if we were their Savior. O Jesus, give us the cross! Let us bear the cross; but let us bear it with You, for without You we shall soon fall beneath the burden. O Jesus, help us to carry the cross with reverence and affection, but always for You, for to You alone belong all honor and love!

VI. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus. "There is no beauty in him, nor comeliness: and we have seen him, and there was no sightliness, that we should be desirous of him. . . . And his look was as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed him not" (Is. LIII, 2, 3). Thus reads the prophetical Passional written by Isaias. The tears, the blood, the dust have all disfigured Jesus. But this is only the external appearance of our expiating Victim, the dishonoring stigma

of sin. Before God and His angels how beautiful the interior of this same Victim! For there is no grander sight than the inner splendor of a soul vowed to sacrifice. And yet how few there are who comprehend this beauty of sacrifice even if they do not despise it: *Despectum et novissimum virorum, virum dolorum . . . nec reputavimus eum* (Is. LIII, 3). May Jesus grant us light to see His divinity ever shining through the blood and dust that covered Him; may He who impressed our souls with the glorious character of His priesthood stamp us also with His not less glorious character of victim!

Let us apply our souls and the souls of those confided to us, as did Veronica her veil, to the countenance of our Savior stained with blood and tears. The miracle of the Holy Face is a symbolic prophecy: the effort at personal sanctification and the art of spiritual guidance ought to have as their aim to mark our souls and the souls of others with the imprint of Jesus. "For whom he foreknew he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son" (Rom. VIII, 29). And this divine resemblance to Jesus cannot be impressed more distinctly and deeply than by contact with Him in His state of victim on the Eucharistic altar.

VII. Jesus falls the second time. We again consider Jesus crushed beneath the weight of sin; sinking anew, but always voluntarily, in a state of complete prostration. Here we can think of our numerous relapses into sin, so grave, so difficult to repair—and all this in spite of so many graces re-

ceived. We may consider also the shock of unbearable pain which Jesus felt when, in His fall, the heavy Cross struck His torn shoulders and wounded head. This special pain of Jesus caused by the Cross, the altar of His sacrifice, brings to mind another affliction suffered beforehand by Jesus and particularly saddening to His heart: the sin of those who abuse His altar by sacrilegious sacrifice or Communion; the iniquity of the souls who use love's most sublime gift to torture and crush Him. O Jesus, prostrate beneath the Cross, make us feel something of this intimate sorrow; teach us the duty, the necessity of Eucharistic reparation. Ever since the day when You showed the Blessed Margaret Mary Your heart crushed by the outrages suffered in the Sacrament of Love, choice souls, in ever increasing number, have been attracted to this work of reparatory immolation. To membership in this privileged band we wish, unworthy as we are, to pledge ourselves for life.

VIII. Jesus speaks to the daughters of Jerusalem. "And there followed him a great multitude of people, and of women, who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning to them, said: Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me; but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold, the days shall come, wherein they will say: Blessed are the barren. . . . Then shall they begin to say to the mountains: Fall upon us; and to the hills: Cover us. For if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?" (Luke XXIII, 27-31). In the garden of Gethsemani,

His sacrifice not yet really begun, Jesus had sought, we might even say implored, the consoling compassion of the three chosen disciples: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death: Stay you here, and watch with me" (Matt. XXVI, 38). But now in the very act of sacrifice, Himself He entirely forgets—all is for God. No longer does He seek, nor will He accept, compassion: "Weep not over me."

The true priest of Jesus will not seek nor accept the consolation offered by sympathetic and compassionate souls. The ruin of many a priestly life can be traced to the seeking for sympathy, the reaching out for some kind of compensation as an offset to loneliness or ingratitude. Spiritual this sympathy may be at first, but the danger is that spiritual it will not remain. This is a danger ever present, and never to be overlooked. *Vigilate* is the warning word of the Master; against our own heart we must be ever on guard. "Weep not over me" must we say, following the example of Jesus, to those who seem to pity us or to be moved by our personal sufferings real or fancied. Our personality, our qualities, our sufferings, are not for the world; before it we should not appear as ordinary men with their social needs. As priests only should we come into contact with the people, to inspire them, not with sentimental devotion, but with that practical piety which loves God and fears sin. But to instil this horror of sin and its terrible consequences into the souls committed to us, we ourselves must know what it is to dread sin, to consider it as an evil in comparison to which all other evils pale into insignificance. We must bring home

to ourselves the terrible and insistent warning: "If in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?" O Jesus, is it possible that I may be one day separated from You and cast into hell as so much wood deprived of all spiritual sap by a sinful and careless life and fit only for the flames? Shall I one day be of the number of those souls accursed of God and accursed of themselves for all eternity? Grant me now, O Lord, the fear which saves and the sorrow which purifies, so that, after striving for the salvation of others, I may not myself be cast from before Your face forever.

IX. Jesus falls the third time. Arrived at the summit of Calvary, Jesus yields once more to the weight of His Cross, and again becomes the subject of scoffing and maltreatment. This fall of Jesus at the very moment when He was about to be raised on the Cross is full of meaning for us; it should serve to remind us that even in the sanctuary, at the foot of the altar, and after the reception of so many deifying Communions, we are still only men, weak in virtue and ever exposed to the danger of falling into mortal sin. At no time in our lives can we depend on dignity or high office, on increasing age or long perseverance, to free us from the ever-existing necessity to watch and pray. At the foot of the altar this knowledge of our great weakness, confirmed by our many daily shortcomings, will aid us to understand and to say from our very hearts the oft-repeated words in which we there confess our miseries and implore forgiveness and mercy.

Jesus, so harshly treated by the soldiers while He lies prone on the ground, preaches also the necessity of being gentle toward sinners. Following the example of Him who would "not break the bruised reed," we must not show ourselves bitter and hard toward those who have fallen in the mire of sin; otherwise we imitate not Jesus, but His executioners. The Good Shepherd, patiently bearing the blows rained upon Him, foresaw and suffered all the harsh words inflicted on unfortunate sinners by heartless and proud priests. Outstretched on Calvary, at the mercy of Roman soldiers, He begs of us to be tender, kind, and merciful toward all in distress, even if that distress be of their own making. But, above all, oh! yes, above all, He implores us not to deny kindness and mercy to our fallen brother of the altar, to the poor priest who has so much need to meet at our hands respect and tenderness, to be received with the very look of compassion and love which came from the eyes of Jesus to lift up Peter, the fallen Apostle.

X. Jesus is stripped of His garments. All the torments of the scourging are now renewed; the sacred flesh of Jesus is torn again when the executioners wrench away His garments stuck to His body by sweat and blood. By this violent laceration of His body our model Priest inculcates the necessity of that despoilment of heart which alone can render us worthy to ascend the altar and able to stand forever on the holy heights: "Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord? or who shall stand in

His holy place? The innocent in hands and clean of heart" (Ps. XXIII, 3, 4). The altar is placed on high, away from common worldly dreams. He who wishes to live on the summits condemns himself to a life of isolation. Earthly attachment and affection would assuredly bring him back to earth again. Outside of certain rare, very precious, holy, and priestly friendships, which may aid us to approach nearer to God, and which are sanctioned by the Almighty Himself, the priest gives up the hope of any dear affection and condemns himself to repress constantly the natural sympathies of his heart. This, indeed, will occasion daily internal strife, an hourly rending of the heart; but it is a strife, a rending which is absolutely necessary. The more fully we are divested of all human affection, isolated in our sacrifice, forgotten even by ourselves, the more surely shall we be men belonging to God and to all the people, faithful intercessors and true priests. *Innocens, impollutus, segregatus a peccatoribus, excelsior cœlis factus* (Heb. VII, 26).

In this tenth station we are also taught our just relation to earthly goods. Even though we be very poor or possess but an ordinary competence, we must know how to be disinterested toward self and generous to the poor. "They divided my garments among them; and upon my vesture they cast lots" (Matt. XXVII, 35). If Jesus, who, during His public life for the salvation of mankind, had not whereon to lay His head, now does not begrudge His very garments to His executioners, can we not in imitation of Him sacrifice our more or less costly

fancies, a little of our temporal well-being, for the sake of the poor?

Finally, when we contemplate Jesus thus shamelessly exposed to the blasphemous mockery and insulting epithets of a foul mob, let us recall His suffering, His expiation for impurity, His horror of all sins against the holy virtue. Let us bring to mind, also, that if the world is not wholly infected, entirely corrupt, it is because of the preserving perfume which comes from the immaculate Host. Ascending from our daily altar it mounts to the heavens as a sweet-smelling incense, and, spreading gently everywhere like a calm and life-giving atmosphere, purifies the heart invisibly and, when breathed in, be it ever so unconsciously, clears the mind from the miasma of sin. Recollect again how pure our hands should be to touch this sacred Host, to offer it up to the holy majesty of God. The least stain on the soul of the priest, piercing the enshrouding veils of the Host, would, if Jesus were now capable of suffering, cause His immaculate flesh to shudder and suffer as on the very day when the executioners, tearing from Him His garments, exposed Him to shame.

XI. Jesus is nailed to the Cross. "A body thou hast fitted to me. . . . Behold I come" (Heb. X, 5, 7). Not to the executioners but to His Father does Jesus give Himself up; not through force but through love does He now extend His hands and feet on the Cross. The crushing of bone and sinew under the blows of the hammer, the trembling which shakes His entire frame, the blood which

oozes from His wounds drop by drop, constitute so many infinite acts of religion and love.

The Cross is raised and placed in position. How beautiful is the soul of Him who is now lifted up to God! How beautiful this Priest at the Altar with His eyes and His heart turned to heaven, His arms extended as if to embrace the entire world in His infinite prayer!

O Jesus! we remember that a few days before Your Passion, though first troubled at heart, You were ravished at the sudden vision of Your Cross; we recall now that You cried out then in triumph: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself" (John XII, 32). O Jesus! by virtue of this divine attraction draw us entirely to Yourself. Enlighten and win our hearts that we may comprehend the beauty of our sacrifice which is also Yours; that we may meditate and live the priestly words which You spoke from the altar of the Cross; that we may be crucified with You in the spirit of our ordination, which, added to the spirit of our baptism, makes us in very truth *Christians, other Christs.* "And they that are Christ's, have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences" (Gal. V, 24): *Imitamini quod tractatis* (Pontif. Rom., De ord. Presb.).

XII. Jesus dies on the Cross. "It is consummated" (John XIX, 30). We have arrived at the infinite consummation, the great moment which dominates and explains the history of time and eternity. The entire past converges toward it; the en-

tire future on earth flows from it; the glory of Jesus and the saints in heaven is only its glorious consequence. At this very moment the veil of the Temple is rent (Matt. XXVII, 51): no longer, indeed, will the majesty of God dwell in the Jewish Sanctuary; no longer in the Holy of Holies will the Lord accept incense and sacrifice: *Deficiet hostia et sacrificium* (Dan. IX, 27). Let us go forth to the Mount of Calvary, the mount of the true sacrifice, let us draw near the Cross with true hearts in fullness of faith: there now we shall see the holy Victim offered up by Jesus, the true High Priest (Heb. X, XII, XIII).

In silence we meditate and bow down in adoration before this sublime scene. We contemplate the dispositions of the Savior's heart, Priest and Victim as He is, while He consummates with His death the great sacrifice. We listen to His last words, and adore the cry of obedience and resignation which wells up from His full heart whilst He immolates Himself for the Father and for us. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke XXIII, 46). Like divine incense, consumed by the fire of love, so sweetly goes out the life of Jesus in this final sigh. And rising from the Cross this incense ascends beyond the world up to the throne of the Most High to fill the heavenly Sanctuary eternally with the perfume of infinite adoration. From the Cross and from heaven the grace which flows especially from the Eucharistic sacrifice, will, like the deifying breath of that divine incense, constantly redescend on our poor sinful earth until the end of time.

Looking on the Cross with its innocent Victim, we

must remember also that we, though not present on Calvary, had a part in this death. As the victim substituted for us, Jesus suffered and died for each sin of ours. No one, alas! can say, even after his ordination as a priest of Christ, "I am innocent of the blood of this just man." On the contrary, each in very truth can say to himself: If I had been more holy as a priest, less immortified in my affections, less careless about venial sin, there would have been less anguish in the soul of Jesus, less bitterness in His thirst, less suffering in His death. But if the disgrace and sadness of Jesus' death may well be brought home to us, we have also our share in the blessings of His Cross. This share His mercy and love prepared for us; for Jesus on the Cross saw and loved in a special manner each one of us. Hanging there He foresaw the decisive moments of our various struggles, the outcome of which was to influence our whole life. By special prayers, by extraordinary sufferings, for each one of us, He merited for us the particular graces which were destined, not only to save us, but to make us priests.

Finally, as we stand in spirit on Mount Calvary before the Cross, we are consoled to think that this great sacrifice we can renew day by day. But is our faith always vivid, always living? Do we ever feel ashamed, as we ought, of our lack of faith at the altar? Jesus is there we know to supply that in which we are wanting; but we must perform our part; we must not forget at least to plunge ourselves, to lose ourselves, as it were, in His infinite adoration and expiation. O Jesus! make us realize the true mean-

ing of the words spoken at our ordination *Agnoscite quod agitis.* Grant us also zeal and light to explain to the faithful the true meaning of the crucifix, which they honor in their homes, of the cross, which, following a pious practice they wear on their hearts; but chiefly, and above all, teach us how to impress and fill their minds with the real signification of the Eucharistic altar, how to bring them to live on this sacrifice and Communion as on the very Bread of Life.

XIII. Jesus is taken down from the Cross. Here we may contemplate Mary as the first who receives the revelation of the devotion to the Sacred Heart while she stands there and sees the lance pierce the Savior's side. We may meditate on her as the model of our communions and priestly thanksgiving, immolating herself as she supports the body of Jesus in her arms and offers it again to God. We may see in her the dispenser of the graces of salvation, since to her, as her very own, is delivered up the Victim of the Cross.

We may also follow the soul of Jesus to Limbo where those saved under the ancient Law await the opening of heaven through His blood. Through centuries many among them have longed for this day which was to show them the Light of the World. What joy on beholding the Victim who had saved them by the anticipated virtue of His blood! Toward Him they come with happy expectation: Adam, who had despoiled his children of their inheritance, hurrying to prostrate himself before the One who had

repaired his work of ruin; Abel, Abraham, Isaac, Aaron, all the holy priests of the past coming to bow down before Jesus, to surrender their provisional priesthood into the hands of the unique eternal Pontiff.

XIV. Jesus is embalmed and placed in the Sepulchre. What devotion fills the hearts of the holy women as they wash and embalm the body of Jesus! What an example and what a reproach to us who are at times so distracted after Communion as though we had entirely forgotten that Jesus dwells within us, and to whom perhaps the quarter of an hour of prayer after Mass seems unendurably long! Again, by this embalming, Jesus is brought nearer to His sinful brethren; for He is now treated as an ordinary child of Adam subject to corruption: "They took therefore the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths, with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury" (John XIX, 40). A glorious resurrection, however, and not corruption, awaits Jesus in the tomb. This triumph will both accentuate the victimal character of Jesus and prove the efficaciousness of His sacrifice. It will be as the sacred fire which fell of old from heaven on the altar, for it will bear witness that the sacrifice is accepted by God, and that, being infinitely agreeable to Him, it will break forever the power of sin, and thus change death into immortality.

The holy women returned to the tomb at the first dawn of Sunday morning with fresh perfumes and spices. So we also should not after our morning

Mass desert the church altogether for the rest of the day. We should return to the altar where Jesus is, to renew our thanksgiving and to receive Him again spiritually.

And now, O Jesus, we have followed Your holy Passion, we have accompanied You through the vale of tears, we have trod with You the way to Calvary where we have seen You insulted, reviled, dying. Grant that we may often return with Mary to contemplate this last scene, and, kneeling with her on the sorrowful mount, offer ourselves in immolation for our sins and the sins of the world. May we understand better from day to day our Eucharistic altar and see in it more and more the cross of our own immolation for God and for souls; the cross dark now perhaps, in its night of sorrow, but bright to our faith in its assurance of glory to come.

THIRD PART.

THE HEAVENLY CONSUMMATION.

JESUS, THE ETERNAL PONTIFF, ENTERS HEAVEN AS THE TRUE SAINT OF SAINTS, THERE TO BRING TO ITS CONSUMMATION THE UNIQUE SACRIFICE OF THE CROSS. THIS HE DOES BY OPENING HEAVEN TO THE ELECT, WHO NOW THROUGH HIS DEATH POSSESS THE PROMISES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT; BUT ABOVE ALL, BY ETERNALLY OFFERING TO THE FATHER THE HOMAGE OF HIS HOLY HUMANITY, UNITED TO THE HOMAGE OF THE BLESSED, HIS MYSTICAL BODY, IN THIS STATE OF GLORY, WHICH IS THE NECESSARY CONFIRMATION AND CONSEQUENCE OF THE EFFICACY OF THE CROSS.

CHAPTER I.

The Reality of the Consummation.

Jesus enters heaven as the true High Priest of the true Holy of Holies there to consummate the unique sacrifice of the Cross.

Arisen from the dead, Jesus remains a priest; and as a priest He enters heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father. This the Epistle to the Hebrews affirms more than once. It is even from this heavenly survival that the principal argument for the superiority of the new priesthood over the old is drawn. At every turn we meet in the pages of the epistle the vision of Jesus the heavenly Priest: "Having therefore a great high-priest that hath passed into the heavens" (Heb. IV, 14); "But this (priest), for that he continueth forever, hath an everlasting priesthood, . . . always living to make intercession for us . . ." (VII, 24-25); "We have such an high-priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of majesty in the heavens" (VIII, 1).

The sacred author never loses sight of the ministry performed on the Cross by our Pontiff; but to him this ministry appears particularly grand and fruitful because of its heavenly bearing. Jesus is the High Priest preeminently because His sacrifice, though offered on the Cross, is consummated above in the

true Holy of Holies, "within the veil; where the forerunner, Jesus, is entered for us, made a high-priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech" (Heb. VI, 19, 20).

Exalted so high, the heavenly priesthood cannot be a simple title of honor preserved only in memory of a sacrifice offered once for all on the Cross. Nor can it consist only in the ministry which Jesus fulfils here vicariously through His priests in the Eucharistic sacrifice and in the sanctification of souls. A mere title, a remembrance, even a vicarious earthly ministry, could not come up to the meaning expressed so glowingly by the Epistle to the Hebrews. The texts, in describing the entrance of Jesus into heaven and His presence there, picture for us One who is active in a priestly capacity; they show forth His work, in the words of Bossuet, as "an office, a feast eternally celebrated for us at the right hand of the Father." [1]

That this active ministry entails the existence of a sacrifice properly so-called, independent of the Cross, complete in itself, and of a kind apart, we should not venture to think.

Without attempting to define its exact nature, certain theologians speak of a "heavenly sacrifice" as the preeminent sacrifice, of which earthly oblations were only the shadow and figure, and which alone is perfect religion; a sacrifice very real though heavenly, without immolation, a sacrifice full of life and glory.[2] Others are more precise. They see the essence of sacrifice in an interior act of obedience

[1] Bossuet, *Méditations sur l'Evangile,* La dernière semaine, 52e jour.

[2] Sauvé, *Jésus intime,* 3d Ed., III, pp. 203-215.

manifested externally in some way: if, they say, the obedience exhibited by the death on the Cross was a true sacrifice, so also, the obedience displayed in heaven by the humanity of Jesus in its sensible adoration of the God-head, ought to constitute a real sacrifice, different, indeed, from that of the Cross and far superior to it.[1]

Outside the inconvenience of introducing new theories of sacrifice which deviate from history as well as from the ordinary theological definitions, these systems commit the graver fault of being at variance with Holy Scripture. The Epistle to the Hebrews speaks constantly of the death on the Cross as being the unique and definitive sacrifice. It ever opposes to the multiplicity of powerless offerings under the Law, the oneness of our perfect oblation. The entrance into heaven of our High Priest and His priestly activity there, are connected with this unique sacrifice: through His blood Jesus enters into the Sanctuary; there He intercedes for us through the merits of His death. And if He offers up the adoration performed by His holy humanity in its glorified state, this religious homage does not constitute a special oblation, a sacrifice rightly so-called and independent of the Cross, for it is but the natural consequence, the necessary complement, of the efficacious sacrifice of the Cross (Heb. X, 11-14).

Having entered into the Tabernacle of the Law, called the Holy of Holies, the high priests of Israel

[1] See in C. Pesch, *De Verbo Inc.*, No. 549, 550, the exposition and refutation of these new theories.

appeared greater and more priestly; not because they pretended to offer within the veil a new sacrifice of superior nature, but simply because there they consummated the sacrifice of Yearly Expiation already offered outside. Thus, also, when Jesus our High Priest enters the heavenly Sanctuary, and there appears to us as the eternal Priest eminently active and beneficient, it is not because He is about to inaugurate a new religion or to offer up a more perfect sacrifice, but simply because He goes to consummate the sacrifice of the Cross. This comparison between the entrance of Jesus into heaven and the solemn entrance of the Jewish high priest into the Sanctuary of the Law, is developed at length in the Epistle to the Hebrews. "For there was a tabernacle made the first, wherein were the candlesticks, and the table, and the setting forth of loaves. . . . And after the second veil, the tabernacle, which is called the Holy of Holies: Having a golden censer, and the ark of the testament covered about on every part with gold. . . . Into the first tabernacle the priests indeed always entered, accomplishing the offices of sacrifices. But into the second, the high priest alone, once a year: not without blood, which he offereth for his own, and the people's ignorance. . . . But Christ, being come an high-priest of the good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hand, . . . by his own blood, entered once into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption. . . . For Jesus is not entered into the Holies made with hands, the patterns of the true: but into heaven itself, that he may

appear now in the presenec of God for us" (Heb. IX, 2-12, 24).

So strikingly clear and apt is the commentary of Bossuet on the ninth chapter of this epistle, that we are led to quote it at length: "The high priest offers his sacrifice outside the Sanctuary in the midst of the assembly of his people; Christ offers the sacrifice of His death on earth before all men. The high priest passes behind the veil into the Holy of Holies; Jesus after His bloody sacrifice penetrates the true Holy of Holies, heaven. . . . The high priest, having immolated his victim on the altar of the first Tabernacle, carries the blood into the inner Sanctuary before the face of God; does not Jesus, immolated upon earth, accomplish this mystery also, ascending to-day to the heavens? For behold Him drawing nigh to His Father, and exhibiting His recent wounds, softly radiant with the rosy and glorious mark of the divine blood of the New Covenant, shed for the remission of our crimes. . . . Has He not truly carried before God the blood of the innocent Victim immolated for our salvation? Open, then, O veil of mystery, open, Sanctuary of eternity in which the adorable Trinity dwells, and let Jesus our High Priest enter into the most intimate secrets of the Father." [1]

The heavenly ministry of Jesus, then, consists in this: He enters heaven, the true Sanctuary, as the high priest of old entered the Holy of Holies; He enters there only by His blood, *per proprium san-*

[1] Bossuet, *Sermon pour l'Ascension* (Vivès, X, p. 272). Cf. also, Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons,* II, Serm. 18, pp. 210-212.

guinem, introivit semel in Sancta (Heb. IX, 12), that is, by virtue of the sacrifice of the Cross; and He enters there only to consummate before God this unique sacrifice.

But what is this heavenly consummation? In what does it consist?

In the same one total heavenly consummation there are two aspects, one temporal, the other eternal, which we will strive to explain in the two following chapters. From the light thrown on our task by the Epistle to the Hebrews, it will be easy to show in the first place, that the consummation consists in the prayer and action of Jesus by which He puts us in possession of the good things of the New and Eternal Testament. In a second chapter, aided again by the Epistle to the Hebrews, and especially by the theology of St. Paul, as found in his other epistles, we shall attempt to demonstrate that beyond and above this temporal consummation there is another, eternal and entirely for God, consisting in the offering of the adoration of the holy humanity of Jesus and of the Blessed, His mystical body, in that state of glory which is the confirmation and the necessary consequence of the efficacious sacrifice of the Cross.

CHAPTER II.

The Temporal Aspect of the Heavenly Consummation.

Jesus enters heaven as the true High Priest of the true Holy of Holies there to consummate the sacrifice of the Cross by interceding for us through the merits of His death, in order that we may come with Him into the possession of those things promised in the Eternal Testament.

In heaven Jesus intercedes for us. Constantly He presents before His Father the merits of the blood shed on the Cross asking and bringing about our sanctification; and lastly, the goal of His desires attained, He leads us into the possession of our divine heritage.

In this rôle of Jesus St. Thomas sees a true sacerdotal act and a real consummation of the sacrifice of the Cross. Very precisely he distinguishes, and at the same time connects together, the oblation,—the sacrifice properly so-called, and the celestial consummation,—the consequence of the sacrifice, consisting in our introduction into heaven to participate in the eternal fruits of the Cross.[1]

St. Thomas faithfully interprets the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews when he sees in the part

[1] Cf. St. Thomas, 3, q. 22, a. 5; Salmanticenses, *De Inc. Verbi*, Disp. 32, nn. 44, 45; Janssens, *De Deo Homine*, Friburg, 1901, I, pp. 742, 743.

which Jesus fulfils for us in heaven nothing less than the formal exercise of His priesthood, and a real consummation of the sacrifice of the Cross; for the epistle never forgets to connect the heavenly preoccupation of Jesus in our regard with the priesthood and the Cross.

To establish this connection, it will suffice to cite a few texts from the sacred writer.

First of all, he immediately reminds us that Jesus, our High Priest, has entered heaven for us. He has entered there as our precursor to trace the way for us; He has entered there to appear in our favor and intercede for us; He has entered there to present for us to the Father the Victim of the Cross. "The forerunner Jesus is entered for us" (VI, 20); "For Jesus is not entered into the Holies made with hands, the patterns of the true; but into heaven itself, that He may appear now in the presence of God for us" (Heb. IX, 24).

The prayer of Jesus, our advocate in heaven, is connected with the sacrifice of expiation offered on the Cross. This we find in an oft-cited passage of St. John: "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just: And he is the propitiation for our sins" (I John II, 1, 2). Jesus is our representative before God; He pleads in our favor His innocence and His victimal expiation for sin. More expressly still does the Epistle to the Hebrews connect the work of intercession and salvation accomplished for us in heaven with Christ's sacrifice and priesthood: "But this, for that he continueth forever, hath an everlasting priesthood. Whereby he is able

also to save forever them that come to God by him; always living to make intercession for us" (Heb. VII, 24, 25). It is by exercising His eternal priesthood that Jesus intercedes for all those who approach God through Him. And it is the virtue flowing from the sacrifice of the Cross which makes this intercession efficacious; for it presents to the Father the merits of the Savior's blood; the God-Man appears before the Father with His humanity once immolated for us, and with the glorious marks of past suffering on His hands: "(Christ) . . . by His own blood, entered once into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. IX, 12). "Now once at the end of ages, he hath appeared for the destruction of sin, by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. IX, 26).

The aim and the end of this offering and of all these acts of intercession is to purify us, to sanctify us, and at last, introducing us into the true Sanctuary, to put us in possession of the good things of the New Testament.

Under the Old Law, the only one allowed to enter the Holy of Holies was the high priest. The people were forbidden to penetrate thus far, to put them in mind that their victims were powerless to purify souls. Sin ever blocked the way which led to God. "Into the first tabernacle the priests indeed always entered. . . . But into the second, the high-priest alone, once a year. . . . The Holy Ghost signifying this, that the way into the Holies was not yet made manifest" (Heb. IX, 6-8). But though the priest was allowed to enter the inner Sanctuary, even his action wrought no real purification. The true

work of sanctification was reserved for the One High Priest, who entered the Holy of Holies with His own blood. Through this blood He became the mediator of the New Testament, bringing us near to God and conferring on us the right to an eternal inheritance. "But Christ, being come an high-priest of the good things to come . . . by his own blood, entered once into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption. . . . The blood of Christ . . . (shall) cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God. And, therefore, he is the mediator of the New Testament, that . . . they that are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (IX, 11-15).

By His blood our High Priest entered heaven as our precursor; He has marked the way for us, giving us an assured hope of one day penetrating behind the veil even to the very presence of the Most High. "We may have the strongest comfort, who have fled for refuge to hold fast the hope set before us. Which we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and firm, and which entereth in even within the veil; where the forerunner Jesus is entered for us, made a high-priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech" (Heb. VI, 18-20); "Having therefore, brethren, a confidence in the entering into the Holies by the blood of Christ; a new and living way which He hath dedicated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, and a high-priest over the house of God" (Heb. X, 19-21).

How great our Pontiff appears in this sacred min-

istry of prayer which He fulfils for us in presence of the Father! How powerful "this High Priest," to use the words of Bossuet, "through whom all our prayers are heard, through whom all grace is confirmed to us . . . through whom all who wish to draw near to God are assured of admission." "This is why," continues the eloquent Bishop, "I am not afraid to say that Jesus alone is heard before God, for all others are heard only through Him. What helps us to understand this is the scene described by the Apocalypse as taking place in heaven (IV, V). The ancients standing around the throne present our prayers; but before the throne in the midst of the ancients there is a lamb as if slain. . . . He is before the throne so that none may approach except alone through Him." [1]

When they attempt to tell us the very nature of this intercession of Jesus, the theologians fail to agree. According to Suarez, Petavius, and Franzelin, it is a true prayer, a formal request, explicit and actual. In the mind of Vasquez and Thomassin it is not a true prayer absolutely; it may be called an implicit request, a virtual prayer, inasmuch as Jesus being present before God with the human nature which He has taken and which He has immolated for us, wins for us divine favor.

But leaving aside all subtle searching into what seems to be hidden from us, we may rest content with the knowledge gleaned from the inspired writings. There we are told that Jesus, ever living to intercede in our favor, appears before God with His humanity,

[1] Bossuet, *Sermon pour l'Ascension*, 2e p. (Vivès, X, 277).

which has been immolated for us. This is as much as to say that in heaven Jesus is constantly occupied with our salvation; His merits, His very desires and wishes are for us, unknown and unworthy though we may be. We occupy His life in heaven: our names, our wants, our miseries, ever occur in the ineffable relations of Jesus with His Father. The blood shed on Calvary, the offering of the sacred humanity, the priestly powers of the unique Priest, are all perpetually at work to save us. In the light from heaven as also in the splendors which gleamed from the Passion and death of the Savior, there is revealed to us a mystery of grandeur and love: the grandeur of our Christian soul and the eternal love of Jesus.

How rich, indeed, how beautiful is the inheritance which the love and the prayer of our High Priest prepare for us in heaven! Infinitely poor in comparison with ours was the heritage won for Israel by the blood of its victims: a few temporal blessings and a strip of land on the Mediterranean shore. But to us is promised, and for us is procured by our Victim, the glory and happiness of heaven, the glory of God Himself in His kingdom beyond. "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" . . . "possess you the kingdom prepared for you" (Matt. XXV, 21, 34). It is nothing less than the inheritance of Jesus Himself; for of this we shall partake as "heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. VIII, 17). In the prayer which followed the Last Supper, after having asked for Himself the glory of heaven (John XVII, 1-8); after having in a special manner interceded for His Apostles, His priests (John XVII, 9,

19); Jesus ends by praying for the entire number of the faithful who will believe in Him, insisting that they also may enter into His glory: "For them also (do I pray) who . . . shall believe in me . . . Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me may be with me; that they may see my glory" (John XVII, 20, 24). What an assurance to us of salvation and glory! "Father I will": is it not a striking fact that Jesus spoke but once in so determined and absolute a manner? And this He did to ask that we should be glorified with Himself. "That they may be with me": to be with Jesus in heaven is to be with Truth and Life, no longer in obscurity or amid the dangers of a journey surrounded on all sides by temptation, but in the full light of peace and in the security of eternal love. "That they may see my glory": the glory of Jesus would not be complete if those whom He called His own did not witness it; but to see it in heaven is to partake of it; to see it in heaven is to enjoy it. "Father I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me may be with me": such was the prayer of Jesus upon earth; and now, glorified in heaven, sitting at the right hand of the Father, as our accredited High Priest, with the same insistence, with the same love He repeats the selfsame prayer.[1]

A last trait must be added to perfect this picture of the heavenly ministry of our Savior. On Calvary, at the very moment of the sacrifice, we saw Mary, the

[1] Cf. Bossuet, *Méditations sur l'Evangile,* Cène, 2e p., 62e jour.

Virgin Priest, standing by the altar of Jesus: in the divine plan the Compassion of our Mother was meant to show the Passion of our Savior more humanly merciful, to make it more tenderly attractive. The plan of God does not change; His gifts to her cannot be withdrawn just when He crowns her as the universal Queen in heaven and earth: thus in the eternal Tabernacle Mary must preserve her glorious cooperation with the sacred ministry of Jesus. In consequence of her immolation with Jesus on Calvary she is now in heaven the intermediary of all our prayers to Him and the channel of all His graces. Do we not feel still more confident when we see the Virgin Priest, the omnipotence of prayer, *omnipotentia supplex*, associated with our eternal Advocate and Pontiff in the heavenly consummation of His sacrifice?

Great and beautiful, indeed, is this heavenly consummation of the sacrifice of the Cross; well worthy it is of the supreme High Priest acting in the perfect Sanctuary.

And yet, grand and wonderful though it really is to see Jesus finish His earthly work by placing us in possession of our glorious inheritance, we may be allowed to remark that this is not the last word on His heavenly ministry. This ministry must proceed further. The closing scene must be for Jesus Himself and for God. Our glorification, subordinate in the scheme of God, is only a part of the superior aim which God had in view in the plan of salvation. This aim can be nothing else than to effectuate the full

efficacy of the sacrifice of the Cross over sin and death; to unite the mystical body of the Savior to its head, and thereby to make up the perfect host which shall offer that eternal adoration to the Almighty by which alone the unique and infinite sacrifice can receive its fitting consummation.

CHAPTER III.

The Eternal Aspect of the Heavenly Consummation.

Jesus enters heaven as the true High Priest of the true Holy of Holies, there to consummate the sacrifice of the Cross by eternally offering to the Father the adorations of His holy humanity and of the Blessed, His mystical body, in that state of resurrection and of glory which is the confirmation and the necessary consequence of the efficacious sacrifice which vanquishes sin and death.

To begin with, it may be well to state what is exactly meant by this aspect of the heavenly consummation.

It is certain that Our Lord will offer to the Father during all eternity the adoration of His glorified humanity and of His mystical body. But the glory of Jesus and of the just is connected with the sacrifice of the Cross so intimately, we might even say, so necessarily, and, as it were, so essentially, that we cannot help but see in it a very real consummation of the sacrifice.

Sacred Scripture alludes many times to the connection between the glorification of Christ's holy humanity and the Cross. In the prayer which terminates the discourse after the Last Supper and which expresses the dispositions of the Savior, or rather

the *intentions* for which the great sacrifice was offered, Jesus, before all else, asks the Father to extend to His humanity the glory of which His divine nature had been in possession from all eternity: "Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son. . . . I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do; and now glorify thou me, O Father, with thyself, with the glory which I had, before the world was, with thee" (John XVII, 1-5). Later on, discoursing with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, Jesus, unfolding the prophecies made of old, points out the relationship which exists between His suffering and His glory: "O foolish, and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?" (Luke XXIV, 25, 26). No less clearly is this connection established in the Epistle to the Hebrews which tells us plainly that: "We see Jesus . . . for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor" (Heb. II, 9).

But if this relation between the glory of Christ and His Cross should be understood only in the sense of a reward, of an accidental and separable effect or fruit, even then, absolutely speaking, the adoration offered to the Father by Jesus in this state of glory must appear to us in a sacerdotal light, since this adoration is connected with the Cross. This is already something great, but our object goes further. We shall strive to show that the connection between the Cross and the glory of Christ is deeper and more significant. We shall attempt to prove that there is

a particularly intimate relation between the heavenly glory of Jesus and His sacrifice, a relation intrinsic, essential. The glory which clothes the sacred humanity of Jesus is not purely a recompense of the Cross; the adoration which He gives to the Father is not merely a homage of gratitude, is not simply an eternal Te Deum for the prize for which His sacrifice was paid. This glory is intrinsically inseparable from the efficacious sacrifice of the Cross; it is the confirmation and the necessary consequence of its efficacy.

The glory of the saints, also, is connected with the Cross, at least as its fruit or effect. For it is by virtue of His blood that our High Priest opens the heavens to us and communicates to us the good things of the divine Testament. And already from this viewpoint, the adoration of the Blessed united to Jesus can appear as a kind of consummation prolonged in eternity of the sacrifice of the Cross. But beyond this, it seems as though the essential relation which we strive to discover between the glory of Jesus and the efficacy of His sacrifice should be extended in part to His mystical body. In the sacrifice of Calvary there is contained not only the principle of the glorious Resurrection of Jesus, but also the principle of the glorious resurrection of all those who, through faith, the sacraments, and Christian mortification, would one day be incorporated with the Cross. In other words, the virtue of the sacrifice which triumphed over sin and death extends to us. By His Cross Jesus overthrew the empire of sin, which was the cause of death and, at the same time, the obstacle

to our entrance into heavenly happiness. In our resurrection and glorification, then, there is eternally realized the full efficaciousness of the sacrifice of the Cross. With this sacrifice our resurrection and glory are specially, intrinsically, and we might even say, essentially connected.

This is what is meant by the statement that the adoration rendered to the Father by Jesus and His mystical body in the heavenly Sanctuary, is the principal and eternal consummation of the sacrifice. If this can be proved, then the entire religious life of heaven would appear to us in a sacerdotal light; Jesus Himself would then come before us as the eternal Priest, or better, as the High Priest who entered the inner Sanctuary, not only to lead us with Him to divine happiness, but above all, to offer us eternally with Himself as a complete and perfect victim of adoration consumed and transformed by the fire of glory: "The Son also himself shall be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (I Cor. XV, 28).

Another preliminary remark should be made in passing here. To describe this eternal feast celebrated by our High Priest at the right hand of the Father, our mode of expression is poor and imperfect. We speak of the "victim," of the "fire of heavenly glory," of the "eternal holocaust"—words which are all purely analogical when applied to the things of heaven. But, at the same time, though these words can never express the reality as it is, there are no others that are less equivocal, no others that come nearer to the true rendering of the mys-

tery of religious life as it exists in heaven. The explanations which are offered here, as well as those given in the first chapter of this *Third Part*, should not be lost sight of; they will suffice to prevent all danger of error in this respect. When we speak of the heavenly consummation we avoid using the words "the sacrifice in heaven," as we do not pretend to see there a formal sacrifice, much less a sacrifice independent of the Cross. Nor can we see in the religious life in heaven an essential or even integral part of the formal sacrifice. The sacrifice as such was offered on the Cross. The glory of heaven is intimately and necessarily connected with it as a confirmation and consequence of its efficaciousness. That is all. But since the religion of heaven is thus connected with the Cross, we are led quite naturally to borrow our analogies and our terms from the religion of earth, and to speak of a "glorious victim," of a "heavenly fire," of an "eternal holocaust"; the context will always correct the idea of immolation or destruction suggested by the primary meaning of these expressions. Custom also authorizes their use. The Fathers, when treating of the glorious Resurrection, the entrance of Jesus into heaven, and His life of eternal adoration with the saints, are not afraid to use these analogies. Liturgy itself speaks of our transformation into the state of an "eternal victim" in the Sanctuary of heaven.[1]

These thoughts may be beautiful, the doctrine underlying them elevated, even sublime; but if they

[1] Cf. Thomassin, o. c., B. X, Chap. XI-XIV.

lack sufficient foundation, the beautiful thoughts and the sublime doctrine are worth practically nothing. We cannot build a house on sand, much less on thin air. Accordingly, the remainder of this chapter will be devoted to the establishing of the scriptural basis of the doctrine outlined above. Understood and suggested here and there in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is clearly affirmed in the theology of St. Paul concerning the Resurrection of Jesus and His mystical body.

I.

The Epistle to the Hebrews at first sight seems to limit the sacerdotal action of Jesus in heaven to our sanctification and introduction to glory. "But this for that he continueth forever, hath an everlasting priesthood, whereby he is able also to save forever them that come to God by him; always living to make intercession for us" (Heb. VII, 24, 25; cf. also IX, 12-24; X, 12-14).

All this is in perfect accord with the object of the epistle: to oppose the Church, which has a definitive priesthood, an efficacious victim, to the synagogue, which had priests and sacrifice, but both provisional and powerless.

At times, however, the expressions and arguments of the sacred author, passing beyond their immediate object,—the sanctification and salvation of the members of the earthly Church,—grant us a glimpse into a heavenly eternity where Jesus and the Blessed are seen in brighter light.

According to this epistle, Jesus in His life in

heaven is the High Priest of future good things, the Mediator of the New Testament (IX). If this is so, and since we are to enjoy our heavenly inheritance forever, does it not stand to reason that Jesus' ministry as Mediator and High Priest should be in some manner eternal? [1]

According to this epistle the Cross is the definitive sacrifice, infinitely efficacious. Jesus is the High Priest of whom we stood in need, the perfect Mediator (VII, IX, X). Why? Because by the Cross He has forever united us to His glorious adoration.

According to this epistle our High Priest, after having offered "one sacrifice for sins, forever sitteth on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting, until his enemies be made his footstool. For by one oblation he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" (X, 12-14). The meaning of this seems to be that Jesus in heaven sanctifies souls by virtue of His blood while awaiting the time when, at the end of the world, sin and death, the forces of the enemy, shall be completely put to rout by the glorious resurrection of the elect. Consequently, the resurrection of the Blessed and their never-ending glory will prolong and proclaim eternally the efficaciousness of the sacrifice of the Cross.

Lastly, according to this epistle, Jesus is ordained a priest by the Incarnation itself (V). Such a priesthood is essentially eternal; it cannot be lost. It must

[1] Cf. Janssens, o. c., pp. 742, 743.

exist as long as the sacred humanity of Christ remains united to His divinity. The sacraments, even the Eucharistic sacrifice, are instituted for our night of probation: they are symbols which will vanish when the full light appears; they are means of holiness of no further use when we reach the kingdom of holiness itself. But the priesthood of Our Lord will last for all eternity. Some day there will be an end to the heavenly functions which this priesthood exercises toward the kingdom of God upon earth—functions which consist in repairing the damage done by sin, in interceding in our favor, in perfecting our holiness, and lastly, in opening heaven to us and putting us in possession of our divine inheritance. But are there not other and superior priestly functions which will never cease and which are equally connected with the sacrifice of the Cross? All the transitory offices of the priesthood were given for the benefit of man. But can there be nothing except what is for man? Was man himself made for man's sake? And must the priesthood and sacrifice be for man alone? Assuredly no. Just as man himself was made primarily for God's glory, so also the priest is above all else for God: *In iis quæ sunt ad Deum.* Sacrifice is first of all for the glory of God, and after that for the benefit of man. The consummation likewise should correspond in some way with the nature of the thing consumed. And as the sacrifice of the Cross was above all else for God, so will its consummation be primarily for God. Jesus will be then the eternal High Priest consummating in heaven the oblation of Calvary. There He will offer eter-

nally to God His infinite adoration in union with that of His mystical body in the glorious state which is the fruit of the Cross.[1]

II.

In St. Paul we discover a complete theology concerning the sacrifice which, triumphing over sin and death, finds its consummation in the resurrection and eternal glory of Jesus and His mystic body.

The study of figurative sacrifice may already have led us to the conclusion that a state of heavenly life and glory must be the necessary consequence of a perfect and efficacious sacrifice; for in those ancient sacrifices, under the symbols of immolation or destruction there seems to be a kind of tendency or striving toward a superior life free from sin and united to God. These fitful but prophetic gleams arising from powerless rites point the way toward the full light shining in the doctrine of St. Paul. It will be worth while then to consider for a moment the flickering rays emanating from ancient rites, if only for the reason that, having seen the glorious consummation sought after and pursued through the long

[1] Outside of these inferences, which we consider as really theological, a direct affirmation of our thesis might perhaps be found in Chap. VIII, 1-6, connected with IX, 23, 24 and X, 19, 20, where the ministry of Christ in the heavenly Holy of Holies seems to be described as the real offering of that sacred humanity, which, immolated on the Cross, opened heaven to Him, and is therefore identified, according to the Jewish allegorism of the time, with the Tabernacle or the veil through which the high priest entered the Holy of Holies. Cf. also, John II, 19-22; Mark XIV, 58; II Cor. V, 1-9; VI, 16; Ephes. II, 20-22.

series of imperfect and preparatory oblations which seemed ever to lead up to the desired goal, but always fell short of it, we may the better understand how that consummation flows naturally and necessarily from a perfect sacrifice.

What then was this presage of life, this foreshadowing of glory, half revealed by the immolations of old?

At first glance, death seems to have been the last word in the ancient sacrifice. After the blood of the animals had been sprinkled on altar or people, the victims' flesh, at least in part, was burned to consummate the destruction. Unable to expiate sin or overthrow its empire, the victims ever remained under the dominion of death, the fruit or wages of sin. And yet, even from the very bosom of death there seems to come forth a ray of life. A desire, a hope, a beginning almost, of a superior and glorious life, of a life in a sense divine, born of death itself, may be perceived springing from these offerings, all inefficacious as they were and doomed to utter destruction. Thus, for example, the victim, by virtue of its immolation, becomes a sacred thing, *sacra facta;* withdrawn from the order of things profane, it is transferred to a supernatural plane. Thus, the fire of the holocaust, in its almost complete destruction of the victim, seems to make that victim only more sacred, more living, in the supernatural sphere: with the smoke and the odor from the altar the victim is lifted up to God to be symbolically lost and absorbed in Him. Thus, also, the flesh of animals by the very fact of its having been immolated becomes in com-

munion a sacred and life-giving food. Here, then, we see an announcement, almost a germ, of a higher life in each victimal death. God, the author of life, could not have been pleased by a worship ending only in absolute death. Besides, everywhere in the physical world He causes the germs of life to burst forth and develop in the midst of death, since the living being must purchase the glory of its fecundity at the price of a part of its own substance, sometimes even at the price of its own existence: "Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone" (John XII, 24, 25). And in the moral order the same holds true. Every act of mortification is repaid by a further progress in spiritual life. The sacrifices ending in death were not in themselves agreeable to God; they were pleasing to Him only in the glimmer of life breaking through them, in the prevision of a sacrifice whose consummation would be the giving of life eternal. Inefficacious as they were, and ever remaining works of death, they yet symbolized, before God, the efficacious sacrifice which, vanquishing sin, would become the destruction of death and infirmity and bring forth resurrection and glory.

When we come to St. Paul we find him, with his extensive and precise revelation, throwing light upon and completing the symbolism of ancient rites. In many places, but especially in the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, he expressly connects the resurrection and heavenly glory with the efficacious sacrifice of the Cross as the latter's

confirmation and essential consequence. And according to this doctrine, Christ's eternal worship, when He offers to the Father His glorified humanity together with the Blessed, legitimately appears to us as a sacerdotal act connected with the Cross.

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First of all, the Resurrection and glorification of Jesus Himself are connected with Calvary.

When he strives to strengthen the faith of the first Christians in a future life, or encourage them in the bearing of trials, St. Paul does not base his arguments entirely on the death of Our Lord. He speaks of that death indeed, but, ordinarily, brings in the Resurrection with it. He even unites these two mysteries in such a way that he seems to bring forward the second as the conclusion, the crowning, or rather, the necessary confirmation, of the first. His thesis is that for our own resurrection and future life we must exclusively count on Christ's death, the sacrifice of salvation. But to him the death of Jesus is the true sacrifice of salvation only so far as it is related to the Resurrection. Our hopes are based on Christ's death because this death has ended in glory. The Apostle says expressly: "(Jesus) was delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification. . . . By whom also we have access through faith into this grace where we stand, and glory in the hope of the glory of the sons of God" (Rom. IV, 25; V, 2).

Certain texts of St. Paul would seem to state a merely external relation between our faith or hope

and the Resurrection of Christ. This great miracle was announced beforehand as the proof or decisive confirmation of the divine mission; had it not taken place, false would have been Christ's mission, false the Apostles' preaching, and vain, with neither object nor foundation, our faith. "And if Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God" (I Cor. XV, 14, 15).

In these words, indeed, there is no hint of any deeper relation. But if we examine the entire chapter, as well as the context of other passages that may be cited in like manner, we shall clearly see that the relation existing between the Resurrection and our faith and hope in Jesus is more intrinsic and far deeper than any mere external connection existing between our belief and the criteria of Christian revelation. The Resurrection confirms our faith and hope, not merely because it proves the assertions of Christ concerning His mission and Person, and, in consequence, the apostolic teaching, but also and especially because it affirms the efficaciousness of the sacrifice of the Cross, it puts beyond doubt the accomplishment of the work of salvation—our Chief's victory and ours over sin and death. The glorious Resurrection of Christ is not simply an extrinsic argument in favor of Christian revelation; it is an element or part of the economy of salvation; it is connected with the sacrifice itself as the necessary confirmation or consequence of its efficacy. So true is this, that, as St. Paul says, if Christ were not risen from the dead, vain would be our hope of salva-

tion, for we would ever remain in our sins: "And if Christ be not risen again your faith is vain, for you are yet in your sins" (I Cor. XV, 17).

The text just cited can stand alone as the key to St. Paul's entire theology on this point.

The whole human race sinned through Adam, and through sin death entered the world: "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death. . . . Sin hath reigned to death. . . . For the wages of sin is death" (Rom. V, 12, 21; VI, 23). Bent beneath the yoke of sin and death, humanity dared not cast a look of hope toward resurrection or eternal life until such time as it would find a victim able to break this twofold bondage. Century after century it sought madly for this victim; blood flowed freely on altars, and the smoke of flesh, burned in holocaust, ascended to the skies. All in vain. Ever the victims remained under the dominion of death, for none was found powerful enough or holy enough to destroy the reign of sin.

But now a new victim, Jesus the Lamb of God, comes bearing the sins of the world. Like the other victims for sin He is doomed to die: *Stipendia peccati mors.* But if He had remained buried in death, then would He have been like the powerless victims of old. If, overcome by death, He had not arisen again, it would have been because He had failed to triumph over sin. Then would we be left a prey to the destruction merited by our unexpiated crimes: "If Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain, for you are yet in your sins." Ah! if the members of the human race living at the time had understood this

great mystery and its tremendous bearing on their fate, what an anguish of waiting there would have been, what contending fears and hopes, during the three days spent by the Victim in the tomb! The entire hopes of the world were buried with Jesus. If He failed to triumph over death, then would these hopes, vain from the beginning, remain forever dead and buried with Him. But Jesus is risen again: *Surrexit Christus spes mea.* Sin and death are vanquished. Our hopes soar with Him in victory. We are saved by the sacrifice which is consummated by the Resurrection. "Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over him" (Rom. VI, 9); "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? . . . But thanks be to God who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. XV, 54, 55, 57).[1]

This doctrine St. Paul pushes further still in other texts. There he sings the complete victory won over sin and death. For through this victory we also are glorified; but always, he carefully reminds us, on the condition that we be incorporated through faith, through baptism, and through Christian immolation with Christ's death and Resurrection (I Cor. XV, 26-57; Rom. VI, 1-5). Some of these considerations shall be brought up immediately in speaking of the

[1] Critics agree that in the doctrine of St. Paul, which they commonly refer to as "the Gospel of the Resurrection," the true Savior is Jesus Christ dead and risen again. Cf. f. i., Toy, *Judaism and Christianity*, p. 281; Tobac, *Le problème de la justification dans St. Paul*, Louvain, 1909, pp. 178-184; Prat, *Théologie de St. Paul*, I, pp. 185, 186; II, pp. 299, 301.

glorification of Jesus' mystical body; others shall be referred to later on in the *Fourth Part* of this book. For the present it is enough to have shown that, according to St. Paul's theology, the glorious state beginning at the Resurrection and continued in the adoration in heaven, is connected with the sacrifice of the Cross, intimately and essentially, as its very confirmation and necessary consummation.

On the Resurrection morning, the fire of glory enshrouded Jesus to denote that a sacrifice efficacious against sin and death, and accepted by God, had at last been found. Consumed, indeed, was our Victim by this divine fire, but not to destroy Him as did the fire of the ancient holocausts its victim, but to vivify and transfigure Him; to purify Him from all likeness to the flesh of sin; to free Him from every trace of infirmity. On Ascension day, in the hour of His priestly triumph, our High Priest entered into the true Holy of Holies with His glorious Victim; He entered there for us, "that He may appear now in the presence of God for us" (Heb. IX, 24); He entered there above all for God, as an adoring Priest, and, sitting at the right hand of the Father, He inaugurated the eternal feast of the offering of His sacred humanity glorified by the Cross. "We have such an high-priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of majesty in the heavens, a minister of the Holies, and of the true tabernacle" (Heb. VIII, 1, 2).

Never shall we know the entire excellence of the adoration offered by the glorified Victim to the Father from the first instant of the Resurrection and

on through eternity. But at least we can conceive this adoration as a sacerdotal act connected with the sacrifice of the Cross and consummating that sacrifice eternally. On His entrance into this world the Word Incarnate with *Ecce Venio* on His lips offered Himself without reserve to the Father to be His Victim. On His entrance into the world of glory the day of His Resurrection, on His entrance into the eternal Sanctuary the day of His Ascension, being ever the anointed Priest, He again offered Himself completely to the Father in perfect adoration. Raised to this state of perfect adoration by His bloody sacrifice, He has offered Himself and will never cease to offer Himself as the Victim enveloped and consumed by glory on the altar of the Cross for the holocaust without end.[1]

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* *

There remains to be seen, in the same aspect, the relation of the mystical body of Christ to Calvary. Following still in the footsteps of St. Paul, we shall discover that our own resurrection and glorification are intimately connected with the sacrifice of the Cross, or, in other words, that Jesus introduces His mystical body into the heavenly Sanctuary to realize

[1] Cf. Condren, *Idée du sacerd. et du sacr. de N. S. J. C.*, 2e p., Chap. IV. English adaptation, *The Eternal Sacrifice*, p. I, Chap. IX; p. II, Chap. X. Cf. Olier, *Traité des Saints Ordres*, L. III, Chap. V. Id., *Explication des Cérémonies de la Grand' messe*, L. VII, Chap. II and V. Cf. Thomassin, *De Inc. Verbi*, L. X, Chap. XI, n. 8, 13, and Chap. XII, XIII, XIV. It is not necessary to recall here the restriction expressed in the Introduction concerning the personal theories these writers have blended with the great theology of St. Paul.

the full efficaciousness of the sacrifice which vanquished sin and death and to complete the glorious host of eternal adoration.

In that glorious hymn of victory over death sung by St. Paul in the fifteenth chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians, the Apostle associates our resurrection with that of Christ. "And if Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain, for you are yet in your sins. . . . But now Christ is risen from the dead, the first-fruits of them that sleep: For by a man came death, and by a man the resurrection of the dead. . . . But every one in his own order: the first-fruits Christ, then they that are of Christ. . . . Afterward the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God and the Father, when he shall have brought to naught all principality, and power, and virtue. . . . And the enemy death shall be destroyed last. . . . It (the body) is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption. . . . And when this mortal hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? Now the sting of death is sin. . . . But thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. XV, 17-57).

Thus, in the words of Bossuet, "at the end of the ages, when the reign of sin on earth shall have been destroyed, . . . then will Jesus, collecting His children around Him, attack His last enemy, death." [1]

[1] Bossuet, *Sermon pour la Commém. des morts; sur la Résur. dernière.* Cf. also, Prat, o. c., I, pp. 185-189.

One with Jesus, the new Adam, with Him and in Him we must rise again; He is the "first-fruits" of the resurrection and "the image" of our glorious transformation, because by His sacrifice He is its meritorious cause. Only after our resurrection will the entire ruin caused by sin have been repaired, for it is only then that death, the last of sin's consequences, will have been destroyed, and that God, through the adoration of the Blessed, offered to Him in Jesus, will have regained His full empire over restored humanity: "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then the Son also himself shall be subject unto him, that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (I Cor. XV, 28).

This, after all, is the last word on the Cross and heaven: "That God may be all in all": in these few words of St. Paul we see humanity glorified by Jesus and then offered by Him and with Him as the perfect host of eternal adoration in the Sanctuary of heaven. *Ut tota redempta civitas, hoc est, congregatio societasque sanctorum, universale sacrificium offeratur Deo per Sacerdotem magnum* (St. Aug.: *De Civ. Dei*, X, VI). Let but the word "sacrifice" in the preceding passage from St. Augustine be understood in the sense of a glorious adoration connected with the offering on the Cross and presided over by the eternal High Priest of the true Sanctuary, and we will find in that quotation the highest and most complete notion of the consummation of the infinite sacrifice in the perfect religion of heaven.

The masters in the theology of the priesthood discourse at length on this incorporation of the Blessed

with Jesus in the sacerdotal adoration of heaven. From the words of Father Olier we gather that just as God of old acted toward His Son, so does He now act toward His Church. That Church He crushes and almost annihilates under the cross only to lift her up and perfect her in Himself through the resurrection and ascension of the Blessed who go to share the glory of heaven with Jesus Christ. Her He sacrifices as Jesus was sacrificed only to make of her and of Jesus one complete host of glory and praise for all eternity.[1] "We shall ascend to heaven in Jesus Christ and through Him; He is our head and we are His members. . . . When we enter heaven it is Jesus who enters with us. 'To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with me in my throne' (Apoc. III, 21). We shall be on His throne, occupying with Him the same place; we shall exist in heaven as though blended with Jesus." [2]

When Jesus, the supreme and eternal High Priest, introduces us into the heavenly Sanctuary, there to unite us to His glory and to His adoration, He gives us forever a part eminently active, eminently religious. The true name of the state of the saints in heaven is *life*, ETERNAL LIFE, a life of religion, intense, perfect. The saints are offered to the Father by Jesus and through Jesus, but in this offering they are not purely passive; in Jesus and

[1] Cf. Olier, *Explication des Cérémonies de la Grand'messe*, L. VIII, Chap. V. Cf. Condren, *The Eternal Sacrifice*, IId and IIId p. Cf. Thomassin, *De Inc. Verbi*, X, Chap. XIV.

[2] Bossuet, *Sermon pour l'Ascension*, end of the first point (Vivès, X, p. 275).

through Him they sing forever the divine praise, they give thanks, they pray: theirs is a truly religious life forming part of the glorious adoration around the Lamb. Baptism has made us all a chosen people, a royal, and in a measure, a priestly race in Jesus Christ, so that we may offer up through Him our entire life as a spiritual holocaust: "Be you also . . . a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. . . . But you are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people" (I Peter II, 5-9). "Who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us a kingdom, and priests to God and his Father" (Apoc. I, 5-6). But it is only after Jesus will have won us for Himself, after He will have purified and consecrated us in union with God and will have taken us with Him to heaven to reign and adore—it is then only that those beautiful prerogatives springing from our baptism shall be fully realized: in Jesus and through Jesus we shall live eternally before God the life of spiritual victims glorified by the sacrifice of the Cross: "That God may be all in all."

III.

In conclusion it may be well to quote at length the Apocalyptic vision on this religious life of the saints in heaven. "And I saw," says St. John, "and behold in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the ancients, a Lamb standing as it were slain. . . . And the four living creatures and the four and twenty ancients . . .

sung a new canticle saying: Thou art worthy, O Lord, to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; because thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, in thy blood. . . . And I heard the voice of many angels . . . saying: To him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, benediction, and honor, and glory, and power, forever and ever. And the four living creatures said: Amen. And the four and twenty ancients fell down on their faces, and adored him that liveth forever and ever" (Apoc. V, 6-14). "After this I saw a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne, and in sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands: And they cried with a loud voice saying: Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb. And all the angels . . . fell down . . . saying: Amen. Benediction and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, honor, and power, and strength to our God forever and ever. . . . These that are clothed in white robes . . . are they who have come out of great tribulation, *and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and they serve him day and night in his temple*" (Apoc. VII, 9-17).

Here in some passages where the veil of material symbolism is light enough and transparent enough to allow us to look through and get a glimpse of the underlying reality, heavenly life appears to us as a group in adoration around the Lamb. In His promises to His disciples, Jesus, with rapid sketch, had

pictured heaven as a kingdom and a banquet where we shall partake of the very joy of God Himself: "Come ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. XXV, 34). "He will gird himself and make them (the faithful servants) sit down to meat, and passing will minister unto them" (Luke XII, 37). "Well done, good and faithful servant, . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Math. XXV, 23). But nothing more does the Master tell; He has not revealed to us the entire mystery of heaven. To St. John was it reserved to place before us a wider, a more profound view of this mystery as he saw it on the invitation of a heavenly voice: "I looked, and behold a door *was* opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard . . . said: Come up hither, and I will shew thee the things which must be done hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and behold there was a throne set in heaven . . ." (Apoc. IV, 1, 2). We shall, assuredly, be infinitely happy in heaven, seated, so to speak, at the table of God Himself and served by Him, living of His life, inebriated with the torrent of His delights; but adoration will be the object, and, in a manner, the very principle of this felicity. Heaven is the paradise of complete happiness, only because it is the temple of perfect adoration. Heaven is but a temple, but this temple is the bosom of God: "For the Lord God Almighty is the temple thereof, and the Lamb" (Apoc. XXI, 22). Those who adore in the temple are saved by the blood of the Lamb; and their adoration, even as their

glory itself, is ever connected with the Cross.[1]

What an immense cycle of grandeur is exhibited in the sacrifice of the Cross prepared from the beginning of time, kept ever in view through all the striking events of the Old Testament, and now consummated in the eternal adoration in heaven! Our own time also has its place in this cycle; for we have always in our midst the Eucharistic altar, and on this altar the Victim of the Cross. The Christian centuries need this Victim to offer It to the Father in the only perfect sacrifice; they need It to partake of its spirit and virtue in Communion, which, by incorporating man with the immolations of the Cross, leads him to eternal life. After the Old Testament comes Calvary, then the Eucharist, and lastly, heaven—this is the complete cycle of sacrifice: the Old Testament reaching to Calvary, and Calvary itself, through the Eucharist, lifting us up to heaven.

[1] Cf. Cave, *The Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice and Atonement,* pp. 493-496.

FOURTH PART.

THE EUCHARISTIC PROLONGATION.

JESUS TO THE END OF TIME RENEWS IN THE EUCHARIST THE OBLATION MADE ON THE CROSS, IN ORDER TO GIVE TO HIS CHURCH A PERFECT SACRIFICE WHEREIN SHE MAY OFFER HERSELF THROUGH HIM AND WITH HIM; AND IN ORDER TO GIVE TO CHRISTIANS THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE VICTIM WHO, BY INCORPORATING THEM TO HIS OWN DEATH, CONDUCTS THEM TO THE CONSUMMATION IN HEAVEN.

CHAPTER I.

The Proofs and the Mode of the Eucharistic Prolongation.

To the eternal consummation of the sacrifice of the Cross in heaven, there should correspond a perpetual renewal of this sacrifice on earth through the mystical immolation taking place on our altars.

I.

The entire religious life of the Church militant on earth, as well as of the Church triumphant in heaven, must be connected with the Cross. *Per Ipsum, et cum Ipso, et in Ipso . . . omnis honor et gloria.* Henceforth there is no true worship or adoration worthy of God but that which comes through Jesus. While, however, religious life in heaven is connected with the sacrifice of the Cross as the latter's consummation in glory, the religion of earth still needs to renew the sacrifice itself.

In heaven it is no longer necessary nor is it possible to renew the sacrifice of the Cross, either in its bloody reality, since Jesus can no longer die, or under the mystic symbols of immolation, for in the full light of the Kingdom and the complete triumph over sin, symbols and the shadows of death have passed forever.

"The Blessed in celestial glory . . . rejoice with-

out end in the presence of God, beholding His glory face to face; and being transformed from brightness to brightness in the abyss of Deity, they taste the Word of God made flesh, as He was from the beginning and as He remaineth forever" (Imit. of Christ, Book IV, Chap. XI, 2). Visible and glorious, Jesus presides over this sublime adoration and communion. And sovereign High Priest as He is, He realizes eternally, in this worship full of light and of life, the natural and necessary consummation of the efficacious sacrifice of the Cross.

But earth is not the place, nor has the time come for those who dwell on its shores, to obtain the consummation in glory. Here the sacrifice itself must be renewed both to express in a sensible manner our worship of adoration united to Jesus, and also to apply to us the fruits of redemption through our Communion with the divine and salutary Victim of the Cross.

The oblation accomplished on Calvary satisfied in full for mankind: its merits were infinite; but *it could not suffice* for expressing and nourishing the religious life of the Church throughout the ages. Could Jesus abandon His well-beloved Church to spiritual poverty and religious death, without an altar for sacrifice, without deifying Communion? Is it not in the Church of Christ, the last and most perfect form of religion here below, that we should look for the realization of ancient figure and prophecy announcing a daily and universal sacrifice, an oblation which was to be ever pure before God, a victim bringing life, the true Heavenly Bread of the faithful? The

Church must then have her altar with its daily offering. That offering can henceforth be none other than the sacrifice of the Cross, for this alone now remains. Renewed every day and in every place it must be; not indeed in the reality of bloody immolation which is forever now impossible; but under the form of some mystic immolation, fit to express the adoration and expiation of Christians in union with the homage and merits of Christ, their head; fit also to allow our partaking of the Body and Blood of our Savior, as of a food bringing divine and eternal life.

It is in the Eucharist that this renewal of the great sacrifice takes place; there, through His priests, marked with His character and acting through His power and in His name, Jesus immolates Himself mystically under the appearance of bread and wine.

The Catholic view of this Eucharistic sacrifice cannot be better expressed than it is in the words of the Council of Trent (Sess. XXII, Chap. I and II): "Forasmuch as, under the former Testament, according to the testimony of the Apostle Paul, there was no perfection, because of the weakness of the Levitical priesthood; there was need, God, the Father of Mercies, so ordaining, that another priest should rise, according to the order of Melchisedech, Our Lord Jesus Christ, who might consummate and lead to what is perfect as many as were to be sanctified. He, therefore, our God and Lord, though He was about to offer Himself once on the altar of the Cross unto God the Father, by means of His death, there to operate an eternal redemption; nevertheless, because that His priesthood was not to be extinguished

by His death, in the Last Supper, in the night in which He was betrayed—that He might leave to His own beloved spouse, the Church, a visible sacrifice, such as the nature of man requires, whereby this bloody sacrifice, once to be accomplished on the Cross, might be represented, and the memory thereof remain unto the end of the world, and its salutary virtue be applied to the remission of those sins which we daily commit—declaring Himself constituted a priest forever, according to the order of Melchisedech, He offered up to God the Father His own Body and Blood under the species of bread and wine; and under the symbols of those same things, He delivered His own Body and Blood to be received by His Apostles, whom He then constituted priests of the New Testament; and by these words, 'Do this in commemoration of me,' He commanded them and their successors in the priesthood to offer the same Body and Blood. . . . For, having celebrated the ancient Passover, which the multitude of the children of Israel immolated in memory of their going out of Egypt, He instituted the new Passover, to wit, Himself to be immolated under visible signs by the Church through the ministry of priests in memory of His own passage from this world to the Father, when by the effusion of His blood He redeemed us, and delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into His Kingdom. . . . In this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, that same Christ is contained and immolated in an unbloody manner, who once offered Himself in a bloody manner on the altar of the Cross. . . . For the victim is

one and the same, the same now offering by the ministry of priests, who then offered Himself on the Cross, the manner alone of offering being different." [1]

To develop the arguments from Scripture and Tradition on which the dogma is based, does not enter the scope of this work. It will suffice simply to recall to mind the various proofs, adding a few explanations on the manner in which the sacrifice of the Cross is renewed.

The words used by Our Lord at the Last Supper when He instituted the Blessed Eucharist represent His Body and Blood as really offered in sacrifice. "This is my body, which is given for you" (Luke XXII, 19, 20; I Cor. XI, 24); "This is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins" (Matt. XXVI, 26-28; Mark XIV, 22-24). We find in St. Luke and in St. Paul this same idea of a Testament or Covenant consecrated by the shedding of blood. But when we speak of a body violently separated from its blood, of a body delivered up or given for us, of blood shed for us or for our sins, of blood which seals the New Testament, we are using expressions consecrated to signify a real sacrifice. Now these terms, though primarily applicable to the Cross, must here be extended directly to the Body and Blood as present in the Eucharist. For here the Body and Blood mentioned as sacrificed are the Body and Blood as given in communion: "Take ye, and eat: This is my body; Drink . . . for this

[1] Translation by Canon Waterworth, in *Dogmatic Canons and Decrees,* New York, 1912, pp. 132-136.

is my blood of the new testament" (Matt. XXVI, 26-28). Moreover, in St. Luke and St. Paul it is the Blood as contained in the chalice that is called the Testament: "This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you" (Luke XXII, 20; I Cor. XI, 25). The words of Our Lord, pronounced at that solemn moment, signify, therefore, that under the appearance of bread and wine, the sacrifice of His Body and Blood offered on the Cross would be represented and renewed for us. Thus was this expression understood by the Apostles and their first disciples, who, in obedience to their Master's command, "Do this for a commemoration of me" (Luke XXII, 19; I Cor. XI, 24, 25), repeated the Last Supper to *announce* or to represent the death of Our Lord. And St. Paul, who witnessed the faith and practice of the first generations of Christians, institutes a comparison between the Eucharistic table, the victim we eat thereon, the chalice of which we drink, and the altars and victims of Jewish or pagan sacrifice (I Cor. X, 14-21). Lastly, in the most ancient non-scriptural documents which have come down to us—in the *Didache*, in the Epistles of Ignatius, in the writings of Justin, Irenæus, Tertullian and Cyprian—the celebration of the Eucharist is put forward as the preeminent act of religion, as the true Christian sacrifice, and appears more and more explicitly identified with the oblation of the Cross.[1]

On the Eucharistic altar, therefore, under the symbols of bread and wine, by virtue of the very words of

[1] Cf. Rauschen, *Eucharist and Penance,* Sect. IV, pp. 74-94.

Jesus, repeated in His name by His priest-vicar, there is offered up the very real sacrifice of the Body and Blood of our Savior. Jesus, the Priest eternal, renews for us, under a different rite, the sacrifice formerly accomplished on the Cross: *Una eademque est hostia, idem nunc offerens sacerdotum ministerio, qui seipsum in cruce obtulit, sola offerendi ratione diversa* (Trent, Sess. XXII, Chap. II).

II.

This difference of rite between the Cross and the Mass is expressed in the Tridentine formula by calling the former a bloody, and the latter an unbloody oblation: *In divino hoc sacrificio quod in Missa peragitur, idem ille Christus continetur, et incruente immolatur, qui in ara crucis semel seipsum cruente obtulit* . . . (Trent, XXII, Chap. II). To denote this same difference theology uses an equivalent expression when it says that on the Cross the Body and Blood of Jesus were separated really, while on our altars they are separated only mystically. Here it may be worth while to explain the meaning of the words "unbloody immolation" or "mystic immolation."

A mystic immolation is not at all synonymous with a sacrifice merely supposed and therefore non-existent. In the mystic or unbloody immolation of the Eucharistic Christ, there is something *very real with respect to sacrifice*, though the Body and Blood are not really separated. Sacrifice is essentially an act of exterior or public worship: there is no sacrifice

except where an offering and immolation are sensibly manifested. Consequently, since in the Eucharist, Jesus, the victim, is visibly present only under the appearance of bread and wine, He can be offered and immolated in real sacrifice only as He appears and so far as He appears beneath the mystic symbols. Through the words of the priest, pronounced over the bread and wine, the Body and Blood are not only caused to be really present but are sensibly represented as separated: before the Church, Jesus, her Victim, appears in a state of death; for the Church and with the Church, Jesus, her Victim, is offered to God in this state of death. In other words, under this symbolism of immolation there is really *represented* or offered up again to God the very Victim of the Cross with His infinite merits; under this symbolism are also expressed and presented to God the homage and expiation of the Church, of whom Jesus is the religious head and official Victim. Can we require more for a truly real sacrifice? A relative sacrifice it is indeed, whose objective value before God comes primarily from the Cross; but a true and real sacrifice it is nevertheless, in which Jesus is sensibly offered up and immolated before God in the name of the Church.

Some theologians, the best known among whom are De Lugo and Franzelin,[1] thought it necessary to add to this symbolism of death some kind of a change or diminution really suffered by Jesus Himself. By mystic immolation they understand not only the

[1] Lugo, *De Euch. Sacram.*, Disp. 14, Sectio 5. Franzelin, *De Euch. Sacr.*, Th. 16. Cf. Rauschen, o. c., pp. 62-73.

presentation of Jesus on the altar under the appearance of death, but also and especially a certain mode of being according to which the body of Jesus would be enclosed and buried within the narrow confines of the host, a manner of existence in which the organic life of the Body would be fettered and suspended in such a way as to recall the state of a corpse, though all the while this life, flourishing in heaven, would subsist radically even in the Eucharist by virtue of Christ's glorious immortality. These theologians think that the dogma of Transubstantiation involves, and the very essence of a real sacrifice calls for, a certain *state of inferiority* where Jesus would be deprived of some one of His powers of action, of some one of His heavenly perfections. But, as a matter of fact, the revealed dogma is in no way bound up with these interpretations of the schools. Faith does not either proximately or remotely seem to sanction them, or much less to impose them. And we could ask, how can this supposed state of real inferiority be reconciled with the impassibility and unity of the risen body of Jesus? How can the essence of sacrifice —an act of public worship and necessarily exterior —be found in this diminution or change, which, if it exist at all, is totally invisible to us? How, above all, can this privation of organic life be a direct image, or a formal representation, of the bloody immolation on the Cross? If it were necessary to expiate sin again or to merit anew before God, we could understand strictly then, that Jesus should really sacrifice something belonging to Him, that He should suffer or be lessened in some way in body or in soul.

How to reconcile this loss or suffering or diminution with His state of perfect glory would, however, still remain a problem—and a problem extremely difficult to solve. But since the work of expiating and meriting has been already accomplished, and accomplished perfectly, on the Cross, we need henceforth only a *sacrificial rite*, fit to bring before the Father and present to Him again for us the infinite value of the initial oblation and to signify and symbolize our own adoration and expiation.

These opinions we might have completely ignored as our object is not to engage in controversy but to foster piety; but we thought that it would be unwise to pass them by unnoticed, and this especially since it is precisely in the name of piety that they are defended and propagated by some.[1] To these latter we may say that Christian piety, much less sacerdotal piety, is not built up nor nourished on human opinions. For our piety as well as for our belief the revealed word is enough. Now, divine revelation sublimely echoed by the Council of Trent teaches us only this concerning the effects of the mystical immolation in the Eucharist: that it operates on our altars a true latreutical and propitiatory sacrifice, a sacrifice which renews or represents the Cross, a sacrifice in which Jesus is immolated in an unbloody manner by virtue of the very words of consecration which render Him sensibly present on the altar under the appearance of death, the Body on one side, the Blood on the other. "Let us say no more; for the

[1] Cf. f. i., Tesnières, *Somme de la Prédication Euchar.*, I p., 4e conf. Buathier, *Le Sacrifice dans le dogme cath.*, 8th Ed., 1913, pp. 122-130.

rest is incomprehensible and seen only by Him who made it." [1]

[1] Bossuet, *Méditations sur l'Evangile,* Cène, 1e p., 57e jour. Cf. Hedley, *Holy Eucharist,* London, 1911, pp. 156-172.

CHAPTER II.

Sacrifice and the Church.

In the Eucharist, Jesus renews the oblation of the Cross in order to give to His Church a perfect sacrifice in which she offers herself through Him and with Him.

I.

The Mass, like the Cross, is the sacrifice of Jesus. But in the Mass there is a new aspect which could not be realized in the Cross: the Church, through her union with Jesus, offers the sacrifice with Him and is offered with Him as the complete Christian victim.

Assuredly the Eucharistic sacrifice is ever and primarily the sacrifice of Jesus Himself. In this alone consists its basic and substantial value before God. The Council of Trent clearly and insistently tells us that in our sacrifice we have the same Priest and the same Victim who once offered Himself on the Cross; and that, consequently, our sacrifice has the same propitiatory virtue as that of the Cross (Sess. XXII, 2). "At the consecration," says Bossuet, "the Body and the Blood are mystically separated because Jesus Christ separately said: this is my Body, this is my Blood; and this fact gives a vivid and efficacious representation of His violent death. Thus by the power of these words, the Son of God is placed on the altar clothed in symbols which represent His

death . . . and this sacred act carries with it the acknowledgment of God's sovereignty, inasmuch as Jesus, being present, renews and perpetuates in some way the memory of His obedience to the death on the Cross; so that in fact nothing of the nature of a true sacrifice is wanting. There can be no doubt, that this is in itself agreeable to God and serves to induce Him to look upon us with an eye of pity; for it offers to Him His Son under those emblems of death by which His indignation was once appeased." [1]

We would not, however, grasp the full meaning, the entire bearing of the Eucharistic sacrifice, were we to consider it only as a pure and simple reproduction of the Cross. In the Eucharist there is something special, something new, something, we might say, superadded to Calvary—the part which the Church now plays in our sacrifice. On Calvary, the Church was not yet in active evidence, for it was only with the inception of the great sacrifice that she had her formal beginning. "Christ also loved the Church and delivered himself up for it, that he might sanctify it . . . that he might present it to himself a glorious Church" (Eph. V, 25-27). The sacrifice, indeed, was offered for her, but she could not as yet actively offer herself with Jesus, or be offered with Him. The presence of Mary and the faithful few at the foot of the Cross, may, perhaps, have been a foreshadowing of the Church's place in the future offering of sacrifice. But, however this may have

[1] Bossuet, *Exposition de la doctrine catholique* (Vivès, XIII, pp. 87-88). In English, *Exposition of the Doctrine of the Catholic Church in Matters of Controversy*, London, 1827 and 1895, pp. 184-186.

been, it is certain that now the Church must take an active part in the sacrifice. Not only does she offer sacrifice through her priests, who also represent her, while they are the substitutes and vicars of Jesus; not only does she herself offer the infinite Host with them; but she also places herself side by side with Jesus, to be offered with Him, to be immolated in Him, and, so to speak, at His hands. "When we consider what Jesus operates in this mystery, and when, with the eyes of faith, we see Him actually present on the altar, under the symbols of death, we unite ourselves to Him in this state; and we present Him to God as our only victim by whose blood we are saved, acknowledging that we have nothing to offer to the Almighty but Christ Jesus and the infinite merits of His death. Through this divine offering we sanctify all our prayers; and we learn at the same time to offer ourselves as living hosts through Jesus and in Jesus to the infinite majesty of God." [1]

Thus writes Bossuet in a book purposely composed to expose the pure Catholic doctrine on the points of dogma which were matter of controversy between Catholics and Protestants, a book "every syllable" of which, as he himself tells us, he carefully weighed. No need have we then to fear that we shall go astray or fall into exaggeration when we repeat with him that the Church offers Jesus to the divine Majesty, and at the same time offers herself as a living victim in Jesus and through Him. And here, evidently, we do not pretend that the Church can properly or formally stand in the relation of a priest or victim

[1] Bossuet, *Exposition* . . . l. c.

to the Eucharistic sacrifice, nor that she is able in any way to add to the infinite worth of the one true Victim. The only Eucharistic priest is Jesus or the minister who acts in His name. The only victim really present on the altar is Jesus hidden under the veil of mystic immolation. The entire substantial worth of the Mass, all its power of adoration and propitiation, must be attributed to Jesus and His Cross. But since, according to the Council of Trent (Sess. XXII, Chap. I), Jesus renews the sacrifice of the Cross in the Holy Eucharist first of all to leave to His beloved spouse, the Church, the visible and perfect sacrifice required for the perfection of her religious life, it is meet that the Church should be interested in it, and should unite herself to it through her internal dispositions. She must not only offer up her adoration through Jesus, but she must offer and immolate herself through and with Jesus her official Priest and Victim. This is what is meant by saying that the Mass is the Christian sacrifice, and that the Church should offer up Jesus, and with Him, herself.[1]

II.

The doctrine which asserts that the Church takes an active part in her sacrifice, finds a solid and truly theological foundation in the liturgy of the Mass, which liturgy comprises the sacred species themselves with the rites and the formulas of prayer used in their offering; also in the application to the Holy Eucharist of the general doctrine concerning sac-

[1] Cf. *Imit. of Christ*, B. IV, especially Chap. VIII and IX. Cf. Planus, *Pages d'Evangile*, Paris, 1903, III, pp. 120-141.

rifice; and lastly, in the practical meaning of the symbols of immolation under which Jesus appears on our altars.

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First of all, it is clear that the sacramental species, and still more, the rites and the formulas of the offering, vividly represent the union of the faithful with Jesus, Priest and Victim.

In the ancient liturgy, the faithful themselves provided the bread and wine which were to be offered and consecrated at each Mass. This practice underlined clearly the part of the Christian people in the Eucharistic offering; but the same meaning is substantially preserved in the very species of bread and wine. To offer to God the bread and wine, which represent the nourishment of our life, is to offer this life itself, as something coming from the Lord, supported by Him, belonging and surrendered to Him. Moreover, in this bread formed from many grains ground and mixed together, in the wine composed of numerous drops collected from many grapes, the oldest of our liturgical books, *the Didache*, and afterward, many of the Fathers, have seen a figure of the immense Christian society, made up of souls bound together and offered up on the same altar in the unity of the same spiritual adoration.

Still more expressive are the formulas and rites of the liturgy of the Mass. Just after the oblation of the sacred species, the priest, speaking in his own name and that of the people, sets forth the two great dispositions—humility and repentance—which place

us on the altar with Jesus and authorize us to speak of His sacrifice as though it were entirely our own: *In spiritu humilitatis et in animo contrito suscipiamur a te, Domine, et sic fiat sacrificium nostrum . . . ut placeat tibi, Domine Deus.* Soon after, turning toward the faithful, the priest reminds them to pray that their sacrifice may be acceptable to the Almighty: *Orate, frates.* . . . In the sacrifices of old those who offered the victim laid their hands on its head to signify that they were united in spirit with it, and that, with it, they were dedicating themselves to the Lord. To-day, also, the priest intends to signify the same dedication of himself and of the Christian people he represents, when, laying his hands on the gifts which are about to be consecrated, he says: *Hanc igitur oblationem servitutis nostræ sed et cunctæ familiæ tuæ quæsumus, Domine, ut placatus accipias.* . . . As soon as the gifts are consecrated and the Body and Blood of the Lord are really present on the altar, there is a new reason to mention again the faithful members of the Church and offer them up once more: the natural body of the Lord calls for His mystical body in order to fulfil the mystery of unity and to perfect the Christian victim: *Unde et memores, Domine, nos servi tui sed et plebs tua sancta. . . .* Thus united with Christ on the altar, the Church should be a society of saints, *plebs tua sancta,* to be worthy and able both to offer and to complete the pure, holy, and immaculate Host, *Hostiam puram, Hostiam sanctam, Hostiam immaculatam.* But man remains always impure and sinful in some way; and this explains the formulas whereby

the priest begs the Almighty to be pleased with our offering, to deign to bless it, to look upon it with mercy and favor as He looked on the sacrifices of Abel, Abraham, Melchisedech: *Hanc igitur oblationem . . . quæsumus, Domine, ut placatus accipias. . . . Quam oblationem tu, Deus, in omnibus, quæsumus, benedictam, adscriptam, ratam, rationabilem acceptabilemque facere digneris. . . . Supra quæ propitio ac sereno vultu respicere digneris.* . . . Meaningless, or rather, unbecoming would formulas like these sound if Jesus, the most beloved Son of the Father, the divinely-anointed Priest, the holy Victim, were alone the one who offered and the one who were offered in the Eucharistic sacrifice. But when we see at the altar with Jesus the Church, whose members can never in this life be pure and holy enough, we understand why the Almighty is asked to cast an eye of pity on our altar, overlooking for Jesus' sake the poverty of our own adoration; why He is asked to bless and to sanctify the victim, granting us more and more this exquisite holiness which is required for such a sacrifice. Again, we cannot realize the full meaning of this beautiful prayer recited by the priest inclined toward the altar: *supplices te rogamus, Omnipotens Deus, jube hæc perferri per manus sancti Angeli tui in sublime altare tuum*, unless we remember that the sacred things here mentioned are truly the Body and Blood of Christ, but united with us, with our prayers, good desires, and good works; and that of Christ and of ourselves together, is made up this complete offering which we wish to render entirely agreeable to God. So we

invoke the holy angel or spirit who presides over the heavenly prayer, in order that we may obtain the blessings and graces which will make us so free from the stains of earth, so entirely religious as to be worthy to be offered with Jesus, not only on the Eucharistic altar in this world, but also on the sublime altar of the glorious adoration in the world to come.[1]

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The general theory of sacrifice when applied to the Eucharist, brings out in bolder outline the duty incumbent on the Church of uniting herself with Jesus as Priest and Victim in order thereby to realize the perfect Christian sacrifice.

Let us recall for a moment the primordial notion of sacrifice as shown by the history of ancient religions. Sacrifice was an act of public worship in which through the priest, chosen from the people and delegated to the ministry of things sacred, a victim officially substituted for the society was immolated in its stead, to express to God the sentiments of adoration and expiation of all. Notice well that the sacrifice had no value before God as an act of worship except inasmuch as it expressed the sentiments of religion and the repentance of the souls which it was supposed to represent. The worshipping society must be spiritually united to the victim and offered with it in order to make the latter worthy of acceptance in the eyes of the Most High. In every sacrifice, then, there was hidden under an external rite,

[1] Cf. Bossuet, *Explications de quelques difficultés sur les prières de la messe,* n. 36, 37 (Vivès, XVII, p. 42).

a spiritual reality, which was its only worth. Assuredly, our victim is not like the offerings of old; it has its own sacred value, and this to an infinite degree. On the Cross and on our altars there is far more than a merely material symbol of human adoration and expiation. Jesus, our Victim, is preeminent when we consider the value of His adoration; His Blood is infinitely superabundant for the redemption of mankind. And yet, *according to the laws governing sacred things in any society*, the Eucharistic oblation would be incomplete in the line of public worship, it would not obtain all its fullness before God, and, if the expression may be used, its entire effect as a Christian sacrifice, were the Church, the mystical body of Christ, not united to Him in the offering. We have already remarked that the Church, born of the oblation on Calvary, was unable to enter actively into this sacrifice when Jesus first offered it. But already then, Christ Jesus, in loving anticipation, provided the means by which this union should be accomplished, when He instituted and prescribed the renewal forever of the sacrifice of the Cross under the Eucharistic symbols, in order to give to His beloved spouse, the Church, her perpetual and official sacrifice. Henceforth the Church had a definite place, a necessary part, in the great oblation. In spirit must she come on the altar, adding her adoration and penitential reparation to the homage and satisfaction offered by Christ. When she does this, then, and then only, is the law of true worship observed; then is the intention of Christ in instituting the Eucharist fully realized; then is the Christian

sacrifice perfected; for then, and then only, is the entire living host offered to the Father, when the Church, the mystic body, is united to Jesus its head, on the altar of adoration.

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The law of sacrificial union between the faithful and Christ, borne out by the liturgy of the Mass, called for by the general theory of sacrifice, receives its definitive confirmation from the symbolism of immolation under which Jesus appears on our altars.

By virtue of the words of consecration, Jesus is rendered sensibly present on our altars under the appearance of immolation, the Body on one side and the Blood on the other; there He comes again, so to speak, with His Cross. And according to the laws of sacrificial symbolism it is our place now to unite ourselves with the victim through our sentiments of spiritual immolation. This is our share in the sacrifice. The apparent death of the head calls on the mystical body to do its part, as that portion of the Christian victim on which the Cross has yet to exercise its work of vivifying immolation. On Jesus this work has already been accomplished: the crucifixion transformed Him into a glorified Victim who can suffer no more. On the Blessed also, the Cross has wrought its effect; the way to Calvary they have trod, and now, perfected in holiness, they are added to the multitude who adore around the Lamb. In heaven the Cross has lost its terrifying association with the shedding of blood, and now speaks only of glorious resurrection, of that perpetual adoration in

which complete happiness consists. But here on earth, in the region of sin and sorrow, where union with God is yet to be achieved, and sanctification is to be worked out in labor and pain, the Cross still awaits us, and, stained with blood, it looms ever before us to exercise its purifying immolation. What it has done for Jesus and the saints it must do for us; it is the only means to gain heaven, the royal road to eternal glory. For this reason our official Victim appears as though mystically immolated for us, and imposes the salutary Cross on our shoulders, asking us to bear it now with Him who first bore its heavy load alone. Our troubles and sorrows, the labors of each day, our strife, perhaps unto blood, against the flesh with its vices and concupiscences, He asks us to unite with His sacrifice. Now risen and glorious, He requests us to lend Him our bodies and souls, so that, penetrating our imperfect immolations with the virtue of His Cross and elevating them to the sublime heights of Calvary, He may suffer and die again, for the love of His Father, in each of His mystical members. What a beautiful sight would be presented to us throughout the entire Church if all Christians were to understand and live up to this law of sacrifice! In heaven, the Church triumphant grouped around Jesus, the eternal Priest, shining with the luster which streams from the Cross in its day of glory; on earth, the Church militant, gathered within the shadow of the Cross, around the Eucharistic altar, on which Jesus appears as if dead, and forming with Him a perfect victim of adoration and expiation!

CHAPTER III.

Agnoscite Quod Agitis.

Some practical conclusions about our sacrifice: we must teach the Christian people the great theology of sacrifice and preserve our own faith in this Divine Action; we must try to understand more and more the sublime bearing of the liturgical formulas; we must consummate our Mass in our thanksgiving and connect it with the recitation of the Breviary.

I.

How many Christians there are who never fulfil the great duty of sacrifice! How many there are who never cross the temple portals, or do so only materially, never understanding the mystery of the Mass!

The story is told of a countryman who, during the celebration of Mass, with his back to the altar, worshipped an immense crucifix placed just over the entrance inside the door of the church. After the consecration, a priest who was near happened to see him. "Friend," said he to the peasant, "turn around to the altar; our God is there." "No, indeed," replied the man, shaking his head, "perhaps *your* God is there, but I don't know him. *My* God is here," and he pointed to the crucifix. How true were the words of this poor man, and yet, how mistaken after

all! The God of humanity, the true God who saves us, who loves us and who can be loved by us, is indeed the God of the Cross. But the real Cross, the living saving Cross is on the Eucharistic altar. Of this the poor countryman seemed to be unaware. How many others there are who, without turning away from the altar, belong to his class!

All these must be taught. Every Christian soul must be turned toward the altar as its only salvation, its only resting place on earth. This doctrine is not too high for the ordinary Christian: all are bound by divine as well as by ecclesiastical law to assist at the Holy Sacrifice, a fact which supposes that all have sufficient intelligence to understand the act imposed on them. That the altar of Christ should have instinctively a supernatural attraction for those who have been born again as Christ's own by baptism, and chosen and consecrated as a holy people, a priestly race, should not seem too much to expect. The birds of the air and the wild beasts of the forest, easily learn the habits and haunts to which they are bred; all they need is the example of their kind. The natural man alone has lost the sense of his divine destiny; he cannot be led to realize his Christian ideal unless we bring him within the sphere of the divine attraction; unless we bring home to him the mystery and power of the great sacrifice renewed for him; unless we teach him to unite himself with the priest and with Jesus to adore, to ask pardon, to present his necessities before God, but above all, to immolate himself by offering each Sunday on the altar his life with the labors, sorrows, and sufferings of the week.

Inevitably, however, there will be empty places in our churches, and this is surely to be deplored. But to be regretted also is the lack of understanding shown by some of those who come even daily to Mass. They cannot enter into the spirit of the impressive mysteries wrought before their eyes. On us will rest the burden of supplying this deficiency. By our vocation it is our duty to be the religious substitutes of the people and to make up on our part all that in which they are lacking: *Pro hominibus constituitur in iis quæ sunt ad Deum.* For this we have been consecrated; and our delegation is recognized and confirmed by good and wicked alike; the former by their unlimited confidence and touching veneration, the latter by their very hate.

The more deeply we understand the sublime theology of sacrifice, the more faithful shall we be in representing our people, and the more efficacious in our mediation for them before the throne of the Most High. That priest does not grasp the meaning of sacrifice, nor fulfil his duty as the religious representative of a Christian people, who omits his Mass for a trifle, a slight fatigue, a feeling of indisposition, or perhaps through mere sloth. If he but knew, or understood perfectly, what the Mass is, could it be possible for him, even but once, to deprive himself, the Church, and even God, of the great sacrifice, when by suffering some little inconvenience he could ascend the altar? Nor does that priest understand the meaning of the functions he pretends to fulfil, who offers up the Holy Sacrifice merely through routine or with unbecoming haste, hurrying every-

thing connected with the Mass as if to get through as quickly as possible with a disagreeable morning duty. *Agnoscite quod agitis:* Learn from Jesus whose ministers you are, learn from the Cross, learn from the entire Church, which offers and is offered with you, the sublime immensity and mystery of those things which you treat perhaps with levity, or with irreverent, not to say scandalous, indifference and haste.

The great need of the priest is, indeed, faith. This living faith, which raises us to a higher plane every time we go up to the altar, we received on the thrice happy and blessed days of retreat preceding ordination, and especially on the ordination day itself: it penetrated and consecrated the mind at the very moment the divine unction was consecrating our hands and our heart to the ministry of things holy and sacred. But not only is it possible, it is easy also to preserve and increase this faith during our whole life. First fervor, especially sensible fervor, may pass away; what is essential will remain. The interior fervor of the soul, flowing from conviction, will ever go on increasing if we take as our meditation for at least one or two weeks each year, the theology of the Mass, and if in rapid retrospect each morning in our immediate preparation for Mass we review the truths we learned so long ago: I am going to say Mass; that is, I am going to renew the sacrifice of the Cross, the sacrifice of infinite adoration and expiation; through me Jesus is going to offer Himself with His mystical body, the Church; I am to act as the minister of the great Christian society, as

the man of God, as another Christ . . . etc.

II.

When we arrive at the foot of the altar penetrated with those sublime thoughts, we recognize them in all the liturgical formulas; for, through everything connected with the Mass shines the theology of sacrifice. The more we repeat the words of the Mass, so fraught with meaning, especially if we repeat them intelligently and with our whole heart, the deeper shall we penetrate into their unfathomable depths of doctrine. History points out the origin and explains the composition of those ancient formulas. But it can never explain how it is that we can repeat and meditate upon the same words for all the days of a long life and each day discover in them new sweetness and new light. In this we are brought face to face with almost the same supernatural phenomenon which we encounter in the inspired writings.

Here it may be worth while to glance briefly over some of those prayers, giving a running commentary as we go along. It may serve at least to bring to our minds, even if it be but for a moment, thoughts concerning the wonders that meet us in our daily Mass.

In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Introibo ad altare Dei, ad Deum qui lætificat juventutem meam. In the name of the Most Holy Trinity do we draw near the altar: greater then than the priest of the Old Law approaching the Sanctuary, great as Jesus Himself on His way to Calvary. *Emitte lucem tuam et veritatem tuam, ipsa me deduxerunt et adduxerunt in montem sanctum tuum et in tabernacula*

tua. More light each day grant us, O God! So that ascending each day higher and higher on the Holy Mount of sacrifice we may, through our faith and piety, become more priestly in life, more worthy to approach the sanctuary! What a beautiful prayer for a priest is contained in this verse! There also can be found a very fitting prayer for the seminarian, who stands at the foot of the holy mountain, anxious to ascend to the altar of God. First of all he needs light, the light of truth to show him what Jesus is, what he himself is, and what he must be: he must pray constantly for this light, which, during the invaluable years of formation, will guide and help his ascension toward Jesus through piety and self-sacrifice. *Confiteor Deo omnipotenti . . . quia peccavi nimis.* . . . Do we feel the weight of sin as Jesus felt it in Gethsemani? At this moment we should suffer for all sin as our blessed Master did before us. At this moment the heart should be bent down even as the body is bent, with a holy fear of divine Justice, with a deep feeling of humility and abjection, with a heart-crushing sadness because of the great evil of sin. *Cœpit pavere et tædere* (Mark XIV, 33). *Cœpit contristari* (Matt. XXVI, 37).

Aufer a nobis, quæsumus, Domine, iniquitates nostras ut ad Sancta Sanctorum puris mereamur mentibus introire. . . . The Levitic high priest, before entering the Sanctuary to offer the blood of expiation for the sins of the people, had to purify his body. To enter the true Holy of Holies, purity of soul is strictly required; not only the body, but the mind, the heart, the entire being must be pure. *Ora-*

mus te, Domine, per merita Sanctorum tuorum quorum reliquiæ hic sunt . . . ut indulgere digneris omnia peccata mea. Kissing the altar for the first time, the priest recalls to mind the martyrs so completely identified with Jesus that something of the Latter's living sacrifice seems to survive in their sacred bones and is introduced with these relics in all our Christian altars. Again is he struck with the necessity of purity, and to those whose death was a holocaust to God, he pleads for intercession in his behalf. Do we always feel this need of purity when we stand on the holy altar? Do we fear as we should the least stain?

Suscipe, sancte Pater, omnipotens æterne Deus, hanc immaculatam hostiam . . . Offerimus tibi Domine, calicem salutaris, tuam deprecantes clementiam: ut in conspectu divinæ Majestatis tuæ . . . cum odore suavitatis ascendat. Now we speak as though Jesus were already on the altar and was being offered by us to the Father. Human language can express only successively the wonderful thing which is accomplished in an instant of time. From now on we see Jesus before us; we offer Him with His immaculate Flesh and precious Blood for our sins, our offences, our negligences, and for the salvation of the whole world. *In spiritu humilitatis, et in animo contrito suscipiamur a te Domine. . . .* Adoration and repentance, the two great sentiments which our Victim vividly expresses, spring from the soul. This is our part in the sacrifice: *Sic fiat sacrificium nostrum . . . ut placeat tibi.*

Suscipe, sancta Trinitas, hanc oblationem, quam

tibi offerimus ob memoriam passionis, resurrectionis, et ascensionis Jesu Christi Domini nostri. A little later in the Mass, after the consecration, we again mention the Passion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension. In this threefold mystery the sacrifice of the Cross is consummated: the Passion or Immolation of Jesus being the victory over sin; the Resurrection being the fire test of the efficaciousness of the victory; whilst the Ascension introduces the eternal High Priest into the true Sanctuary. *Vere dignum et justum est, . . . nos tibi semper et ubique gratias agere . . . per Christum Dominum nostrum. Per quem majestatem tuam laudant angeli. . . .* We know the important place held in primitive liturgies by those solemn prefaces, true *Eucharistic* prayers as they are, recalling all the goodness of God, uniting the Church of earth and the Church of heaven in a glorious song of praise of which Jesus was always the center and soul. In our turn, in union with the angels and saints, let us recite with Jesus the heavenly hymn: *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth.*

At the moment of consecration the man in us should be no longer in evidence. As Jesus the priest speaks, the words of Jesus he uses, Jesus Himself he impersonates for he is now *Alter Christus*, the priest-vicar of Christ: *Hoc est corpus meum—Hic est calix sanguinis mei, novi et æterni Testamenti, mysterium fidei, qui pro vobis et pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum.* The Last Supper, the mystery of the Cross, the infinite sacrifice, is here and now renewed by me! Oh! that we were not so

cold, so mechanical in our actions at the sublime moment when we accomplish this miracle of miracles. Happily for us, Jesus is with us and in us at this moment, supplying our deficiencies and worthily, divinely, offering Himself—the true Christ of God offering the Victim immaculate!

Supra quæ propitio ac sereno vultu respicere digneris. . . . Supplices te rogamus, omnipotens Deus, jube hæc perferri per manus sancti Angeli tui in sublime altare tuum. . . . We invoke the memory of the holy priests of the Old Dispensation, Abel, Abraham, and Melchisedech, and we pray that our sacrifice may be as acceptable as theirs once was, and that it may be transported to the heavenly altar before the divine majesty of God. In those two prayers we have in substance the entire liturgy, or rather, all religion: the altar of the past announcing the Cross; the Cross renewed in the Eucharist; and the Eucharist opening heaven to us where in perfect worship all is consummated in glory.

Per Ipsum, et cum Ipso et in Ipso, est tibi Deo Patri omnipotenti in unitate Spiritus Sancti, omnis honor et gloria, per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Cardinal Deschamps in an instruction to priests cites the striking words once uttered by priestly lips: "I should wish to die at that moment when, elevating the Host and Chalice together, I say *Per Ipsum et cum Ipso et in Ipso, est tibi Deo Patri omnipotenti in unitate Spiritus Sancti omnis honor et gloria.*" Is not this liturgical formula in very truth the most sublime of prayers and the most divine ideal of life? To glorify the Holy Trinity through Jesus, using His

merciful mediation; with Jesus, helped by His all-powerful cooperation; in Jesus, lost in the unity of His loving adoration; such is the true prayer, the true life of holiness upon earth and in heaven.[1]

III.

Even when Mass is over, the priest may still be joined in sacrificial union with Jesus during the entire day, but especially during the time given to thanksgiving.

In the short time which we may devote to thanking God for the benefits of the great sacrifice, we too easily forget that Jesus is now within us resting on the altar of our heart. The consecrated stone is cold and dead. To consume His sacrifice Jesus desires a living altar on which burns the fire of love, a human heart which He can penetrate with His virtue as a victim, and in which He can prolong and consummate His offering. Just so long as the sacred species last within us, Jesus is there as a victim, and a victim by its very nature seeks to be offered. The best thanksgiving, therefore, is to surrender, to unite our entire soul, all our life to Jesus so as to *be one* with

[1] We think it hardly of any use to proceed further with this outline commentary on the prayers of the Mass, the more so since pious and learned books on this subject are numerous and available. We may mention here among others: Bona, *De Sacrificio Missæ;* in English, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, London, 1903. Chaignon, *The Sacrifice of the Mass Worthily Celebrated.* Girh, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass,* 2d p. Duchesne, *Origins of Christian Worship,* 3d Ed., London. Fortescue, *The Mass,* London, 1912. The great liturgical works of the Solesmes Benedictine Fathers, directed by Dom Cabrol and Dom Leclercq.

Him, and then with this victim, made up of Jesus and of us, to continue on the altar of our heart the sacrifice of the Mass, in adoration, in gratitude, in expiation, and in supplication. Surely it will not be difficult to spend in these four acts fifteen or twenty minutes or even a longer time, and thus make a thanksgiving really worthy of a priest. But since poor human nature has need of variety, and since the very best thanksgiving, by its very monotony, may pall in time, we may by way of change repeat occasionally some of the principal prayers of the Mass applying them to Jesus who dwells within us.

Here a new field of supplication and praise and loving offering opens before us. The tenderness of the *Kyrie* and the exultation of the *Gloria* fill our souls and we repeat these prayers of mercy and praise either to the Savior Himself or to the Father, but in union with the Savior. While Jesus is within us, our Victim in very deed, we may again and again offer to the Father the immaculate Host for our sins, offences and negligences, and the chalice of the precious Blood for the salvation of the world. The *Sanctus* we begin again with the angels and saints of heaven and with Jesus who adores in our bosom. The prayers of the canon so direct in themselves and withal so liturgic we may apply anew to Jesus: *Offerimus præclaræ majestati tuæ . . . hostiam, puram, hostiam sanctam, hostiam immaculatam: Panem sanctum vitæ æternæ et Calicem salutis perpetuæ*, . . . etc. But let us not forget to bring home to our own hearts the encouragement contained in the words, *Jube hæc perferri per manus sancti Angeli tui in sublime altare*

tuum, as we offer up to God our crosses, our sorrows, our labors foreseen and accepted in union with Jesus. What new meaning we find in the *Pater Noster* if we recite it with the sentiments which Jesus had when He taught it to the Apostles! How intimately the *Agnus Dei* is brought home to us while we address it anew to Jesus Himself, the Lamb who bears our sins, and who is surely our victim at this moment when His Body and Blood are within us for the purification of our souls! And again, what comfort there is in the words: *Domine, Jesu Christe, . . . qui ex voluntate Patris, cooperante Spiritu sancto, per mortem tuam mundum vivificasti: libera me per hoc sacrosanctum Corpus et Sanguinem tuum ab omnibus iniquitatibus! . . .* The Savior who has become the life of the world through His death, the Victim given by the Father and prepared by the Holy Spirit, this universal and infinite Victim now becomes our very own, with a personal interest in all our needs of body and soul. The *Domine non sum dignus*, repeated in presence of Jesus, will remind us of the words of St. Peter, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke V, 8); but to those words of humility we will add these others of filial confidence, pronounced by the same Apostle: "Lord, to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life" (John VI, 69). Saying *Panem cælestem accipiam, . . .* we again take up the sacred Victim and call on the name of the Lord in renewed adoration, and supplication. *Quid retribuam Domino? . . .* What indeed can we give to the Lord for all those favors? Nothing less than Jesus Himself living in our hearts:

Calicem salutaris accipiam. What new richness of meaning in the words used at the ablution as we speak them now to Jesus: *Quod ore sumpsimus, Domine, pura mente capiamus. . . . Corpus tuum, Domine, quod sumpsi et Sanguis quem potavi adhæreat visceribus meis et præsta ut in me non remaneat scelerum macula, quem pura et sancta refecerunt Sacramenta:* to apply the Body and Blood of Christ toward healing the wounds left by sin and strengthening the feeble parts of the soul; to build ourselves anew each day with the sacrament of purity and holiness! How beautiful also the prayer *Placeat tibi, sancta Trinitas, obsequium servitutis meæ et præsta. . . .* and yet how often is it said with complete inattention and negligence! Let us repeat it attentively now and meditate on it with Jesus. Thus by way of thanksgiving will we have resumed the greater part of our Mass, but ever will we return to repeat the words which are, as it were, the summary of all: *Per Ipsum et cum Ipso et in Ipso, est tibi Deo Patri omnipotenti . . . omnis honor et gloria per omnia sæcula sæculorum.* In these words shall we show our entire faith in Jesus who dwells within us as a victim; in them shall be comprised all our religion as we glorify God through Jesus, with Jesus, and in Jesus, now and forever.

Would it be going too far to say that those liturgical formulas may have more meaning for us now during our thanksgiving than in the very action of the Mass itself? There seems to be something more personal, more intimate, in the words at this moment as though they express our sacrifice better, now

that we have become one with Jesus through Communion. At any rate this method of returning thanks is decidedly direct and sacerdotal; while it prolongs and consummates the sacrifice of to-day it will help us both to understand and to celebrate better the sacrifice of to-morrow.

Thanksgiving over, we can still pray, and we ought to pray, the entire day long through Jesus, with Jesus, and in Jesus; this we do especially in the recitation of our Breviary.

Let us recall to mind at the outset how insistently Jesus during the Last Supper taught His priests both the necessity and the power of prayer made in His name (John XIV, 13, 14; XV, 16, 20). He does not hesitate to say that they are called to pray even as they are chosen to bring forth through their zeal good fruit: "I have chosen you and have appointed you that you should go and should bring forth fruit; . . . that whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it to you" (John XV, 16). In the Greek text, the second proposition depends as directly as the first on the principal verb: I have chosen you both to bear fruit and to obtain grace by praying in my name. "Priests," says Father Olier, "are made the supplements of Christ Jesus to accomplish what is wanting in His worship; for He uses them to multiply Himself and by this means to multiply the praise, respect, adoration, and sacrifice which He desires to offer to the Father. . . ." [1]

In nomine meo, in the name of Jesus must we

[1] Olier, *Traité des Saints Ordres,* Du sacerdoce, Chap. VI.

pray always; but we supplement His religion in a particular manner when we recite the divine office. If we were alone in our prayer, the outbursts of love or zeal, the cries of sorrow or repentance, which fill the Psalms, would be but mockery or falsehood on our lips. But if Jesus prays with us, then do these expressions obtain their true and full meaning. How beautiful, how sublime our public prayer when thus understood! How far from the grandeur of the Church liturgy are the childish devotions invented and indulged in to satisfy a vain sentimentality! In our liturgical prayer everything is imposing: we use the very words of God Himself, and throughout the year, we venerate Jesus living either in His mysteries or in the saints, the members of His mystical body. But, even here, beautiful though words and meaning may be, they will not suffice of themselves: for the soul, the very life of this prayer must be the Eucharistic Host. The recitation of the holy office is the natural complement of the Holy Sacrifice. Every liturgical hour should be grouped around the altar either in preparation or in thanksgiving for the great sacrifice.[1] And, when at the beginning of each hour, we say the usual prayer: *Domine, in unione illius divinæ intentionis, qua ipse in terris laudes Deo persolvisti,* we should not be satisfied with being united to the praises which Jesus while living visibly in this world once offered to the Father: these are facts too far remote and belonging to a dead past. Passing

[1] On the liturgical connection between the holy office and the Holy Sacrifice, cf. *The Contemplative Life Considered in its Apostolic Aspect,* by a Carthusian Monk, London, 1911, Chap. XIII.

beyond, so to say, the letter of this formula to follow its spirit, we should think of the very adorations Jesus actually offers in the tabernacle; we should see how to-day as well as during His historical life He is upon earth "the Perfect Religious of the Father"; and entering as much as possible into His state of perfect religion, through Him, with Him, and in Him, we should fulfil our holy office of prayer. Thus upon earth as in heaven, there would be only one true and infinite adorer of the Father, Our Lord Jesus Christ. The grace of seeing their liturgical prayer in this light, and performing it in this spirit, the priests and clerics of the Sulpician seminaries requested in the following beautiful Collect of the octave day of the *Feast of the Interior Life of Our Lord: Deus qui plenissimum religionis spiritum Filio tuo dedisti, ut te perfecte in spiritu et veritate pro omnibus adoraret, concede, quæsumus, ut in ipso et per ipsum te in spiritu et veritate adoremus, sicque fiat Unigenitus tuus ille in omnibus Majestatis tuæ unicus et perfectus adorator.*

CHAPTER IV.

Communion and Life in Christ.

In the Eucharist, Jesus renews the sacrifice of the Cross in order that He may give Himself in Communion to each one of us, as the victim truly immolated for us who has now become the aliment of the divine life created in our souls by faith and baptism. The effects of this divine food are: to support and to repair the life of grace or charity in us, to cause it to increase and break out in joyous acts of fervor; to give us in the Host a symbol, a title, an earnest of eternal life in heaven; and, lastly, to place in our bodies a pledge and principle of glorious resurrection.

I.

With pious emotion, Pascal, in his meditation on the *Mystery of Jesus*, listens to our Savior speaking within him: "I have thought of you during my agony; such and such drops of blood I have shed for you." It is true indeed that at the Last Supper, in the gloomy shadows of Gethsemani, on the Cross, Jesus thought of each one of us as if each had been the only one to be saved. But for each of us He gave His entire precious blood. In Communion this gift of love is fully realized: "This is my body, which is given for you." "This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood which shall be shed for you" (Luke

XXII, 19, 20). When we receive Communion, the infinite Victim of the Cross enters into our soul to be entirely ours and live completely for us. The holy humanity which the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity assumed and offered for all, is at this moment assumed and offered in a special manner for each one who receives it. The blood shed so lavishly on the Cross for all, the blood of the Covenant giving all a right to heaven, this blood, one drop of which would have been more than sufficient to redeem the world, is now within us with all its power of expiation and merit. It flows as it were over the soul of each one who communicates as if he alone were to be saved.

Insistently does Bossuet, among others, dwell on this thought. "Your love," he says, addressing himself to Our Lord, "has led You to immolate for us this body just as really as You assumed it. . . . What confidence fills us when we have eaten of this flesh immolated for our sins! Under the Old Testament the people were forbidden to partake of the victim offered for their crimes, thus to give them to understand that no true expiation could be made by the blood of beasts . . . not thus do You treat Your children, O divine Savior; for You command us to eat Your Body, the true Victim immolated for our faults, in order to convince us that the remission of sin is accomplished in the New Testament. Again, You did not allow Your people of old to partake of the blood. . . . But now You say to us: 'drink ye all of this. . . .'" [1] "My Victim you are in all

[1] Bossuet, *Opuscules: Prière pour se préparer à la Communion.*

truth, O my Savior: but if I were to see You only on the altar and on the Cross, I would not realize sufficiently that it is for me You have been offered: but to-day, however, when I partake of You I know that Your sacrifice was for me. . . . Ah! now I see and I know that it is for me You have taken this human flesh . . . that it is for me You have offered this flesh in sacrifice, that now it belongs to me, . . . I have only to take it, to eat it, to own it, to unite myself to it. . . . Come, O come, Flesh of my Savior . . . Come, O Blood shed through love; flow in my bosom as a torrent of fire!" [1]

II.

"O! my Savior, what a sacrifice! Once again, what sweetness in the meditation of Your words! I find in them ever new delights as in the manna of old: Your Body and Your Blood are my victim both on the Cross and on the holy table; and like the Cross, this table is an altar." [2]

"This table is an altar." These few words state the entire dogma of the Eucharistic Communion: Jesus now immolated becomes the Bread of our divine Life.

The idea of nourishment is essential in any treatise on the Holy Eucharist. The discourse on the promise may be summed up in this one thought: Eat my flesh and drink my blood that you may have life (John VI, 53-57). Jesus concludes with this

[1] Bossuet, *Méditations sur l'Evangile,* Cène, 1 p., 23e jour. Cf. Id. ibid., 25e jour.
[2] L. c., 60e jour.

remarkable statement: "My flesh is meat indeed; and my blood is drink indeed." When the hour has come to fulfil His promise, the Savior institutes His sacrifice under the symbols of bread and wine; that is, as a life-giving banquet. What bread and wine are to the body, the Flesh and Blood of Jesus are to the soul. Bread and wine are the normal, and, as it were, essential nourishment of corporal life; the Body and Blood of Christ, partaken of at the holy table, are the normal, and, in a manner, essential nourishment of our supernatural life.

Stress must be laid on this correspondence between Eucharistic nourishment and the life of grace. For thus will the dogmatic teaching concerning the supernatural in us, as also the place or part of the Eucharistic bread in this wonderful economy, be better seen and understood.

The idea of life is by an analogy, which is consecrated in Holy Scripture and profoundly true, applied to the gift of grace. We do not find the expression in the synoptic report of the Savior's preaching. There, grace is spoken of only in the general announcement of *The Kingdom*, whose first effect or gift will consist in delivering us from sin and reconciling us to God in order to lead us to heaven, the mansion of the Father, the place of supernatural happiness (Matt. V). But in the discourses of the Savior as related to us by St. John, the idea of life, of regeneration, of divine filiation, comes up constantly. The same may be said of the Epistles of St. Paul. On these two authors must we depend for the most adequate idea of the supernatural. To re-

sume this concept: Grace is a divine adoption, but an adoption belonging to a superior order, for it makes us in a manner true children of God, born and regenerated in Him and participating in His life. Here in this world through faith, through hope, and, above all, through charity, which unite us to God as He is in Himself, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we begin to live divinely. Through the knowledge that comes from faith and through the love which flows from charity, we already possess in substance the truth and the infinite good, the objects of God's own life. This truth we cannot see clearly now because of the shadows of earth; this infinite good we cannot as yet enjoy because our life here is a time of trial. In heaven, when all trial and all sorrow will have come to an end, when the shadows will have passed away, when faith itself will have disappeared before the light of glory, we shall see truth divine face to face in the intuitive vision; and our hearts will be carried away by the infinite good in the ecstasy of beatific love. In our Father's mansion, in full possession of our inheritance, we shall be happy with the happiness of God Himself and deified for life eternal.

The right to this great heritage and the stream of divine life come to us from Jesus, the Word and Son of the Father, who became incarnate and was immolated to make us the adopted sons of God. "He gave them power to be made the sons of God." "I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly" (John I, 12; X, 10). He is more than the meritorious cause of our adoption: He is its

principle, ever active. He is the head with whom we must be incorporated, the vine on which we must be engrafted, if we wish to have life.

It is through faith and baptism that we are primarily incorporated with Christ for eternal salvation: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark XVI, 16). This idea of incorporation is developed at length in the sacred writings of St. Paul and of St. John. Both, however, explicitly mention the Eucharistic Communion as a *principle* of our life in Christ. In the tenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul brings forward the passing of the Israelites through the Red Sea as a figure of baptism, and the manna as a symbol of the Eucharist (I Cor. X, 1, 3). The two sacraments are placed symmetrically on the same plane as two essential institutions of Christianity, and as a double incentive, each equally powerful, to fight against concupiscence and to give up idolatry. But it is on the idea of incorporation to Christ through the Eucharistic Bread and Cup, that the Apostle especially writes with the view of preventing the Corinthians from frequenting the altar and table of idols (I Cor. X, 14-21). When we take up St. John and read the discourse given at Capharnaum after the miracle of the loaves, we see Jesus holding up faith as the principle of eternal life first of all. But gradually He brings forward the Passion and the Eucharist as the main and most real object of this faith; and we hear Him insist repeatedly on the necessity of eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood in order to have life (VI, 52-58).

Let us consider further this harmonious union of baptism, faith and the Holy Eucharist in the divine economy of our spiritual life.

By baptism we are regenerated and born to that life: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John III, 5). Through this sacrament is fulfilled the first and essential condition of supernatural life: from the overflowing bounty of Christ the first effusion of grace is spread on our souls, which at the same time are stamped with the sign or character which makes us Christians and members of the true People of God. By faith, as by its first natural act, our vital union with Christ is not only manifested, but also made more strong and vigorous. Faith is the primordial adhesion of the baptized soul to Jesus, it is the root or the foundation of charity and salvation: "Rooted and built up in him (Christ) and confirmed in the faith. . . . For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead corporally; and you are filled in him. . . . In whom also you are circumcised with circumcision not made by hand, in despoiling of the body of the flesh, but in the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism in whom also you are risen again by the faith of the operation of God" (Colos. II, 7-12). Communion necessarily supposes this twofold principle of supernatural life. Without our *baptismal birth*, without the *vital activity of faith*, we could not eat the Bread of the Lord: only a living soul can be nourished by the Bread of Life; only a Christian can be nourished by Christ. But what a superabundance of life is

conferred by this divine food on those who are baptized and believe!

But to return to our principle: Jesus the Son of God is, by His death, the source of our supernatural life; and the more closely we are united to Him in this state of death, the more abundantly do we receive of life. Baptism is the sacrament of spiritual regeneration because it incorporates us with the death of Jesus. "For we are buried together with him by baptism into death; that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life" (Rom. VI, 4). Faith also, according to St. Paul and St. John, is the basis or root of our justification and life in God, because by it we adhere to Jesus, as crucified for us: "Being justified . . . through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus . . . through faith in his blood" (Rom. III, 24, 25). "I live in the faith of the Son of God who loved me and delivered himself for me" (Gal. II, 20). "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him, may not perish; but may have life everlasting. For God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (John III, 14-16). But in baptism it is only through the medium of a symbolic rite instituted by Christ for this purpose that we are incorporated to His living death; and in faith it is only by the adhesion given to the divine and light-giving word that we are united with Jesus. What a difference when we come to the Eucharist! Here the Son of

the living God is really and substantially given to us as the Bread of Life. The Flesh of Jesus is given to us under the veils of death, as the victim immolated to become our vivifying bread: "And the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world. . . . For my flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed" (John VI, 52, 56). If, then, baptism and faith, through the death of Christ, confer divine life upon us or nourish the spark of life within us, surely Communion, which brings us to the closest union with Christ in His immolation, cannot but give us this life in unmeasured abundance. Communion is connected indeed with faith and baptism, but it goes far beyond them. It is the consummation of baptismal initiation; it is both the supreme exercise and the fitting culmination of our faith; it is the most potent means of deification, "the true sacrament of life."

All this throws light on the significant expressions used by Christ: "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me the same also shall live by me" (John VI, 58). As if He were to say: "Through its Hypostatic Union with the Word, My humanity has received from the Father the fullness of the life of grace, so that it lives through the Father; and now whoever eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood receives an effusion of this same grace and lives through me." Here the discourse on the Bread of Life is closely linked to the prologue of the Fourth Gospel. In the prologue we see the Word, the fullness of life divine, overflowing, if the expression may be used, on the humanity of Jesus and consecrating it. We see this same conse-

cration spreading from the holy humanity on those who believe in Christ and giving them a share in divine life and divine Sonship. "In him was life. . . . he came unto his own. . . . But as many as received him, he gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in his name, who are born . . . of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth. . . . And of his fullness we all have received" (John I, 3-16). This theme of the conferring of life through the Word Incarnate on those who believe, recurs several times in the remainder of St. John's Gospel. In the sixth chapter, Jesus is more explicit and complete regarding this same subject: "And this is the will of my Father that sent me; that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth in him, may have life everlasting" (40). This faith, however, must embrace the Passion and the Eucharist, it must proceed even to the eating of the Victim immolated for us: there will be found its highest act, its vivifying omnipotence. It is no longer a question of spiritual attachment to or belief in the divine Word, the Bread or Light of Life; it is a real and, so to say, material adhesion to Jesus Himself, to His Flesh and to His Blood, which is at issue; it is a union of love bringing about the compenetration of two hearts, of two lives: "He . . . abideth in me, and I in him" (57); it is the taking possession of life at its very source, the holy humanity of Jesus, which was so filled with life by the Father that this life now in a manner overflows on the communicating

soul: "He that eateth me the same also shall live by me" (58).[1]

III.

We come now to the effects of this divine food. They are to be considered in their relation to our life of grace or charity on earth, in the bearing which they have on our eternal life in heaven, and, lastly, in their influence on our bodily resurrection.

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In four words borrowed from the description of ordinary material alimentation and afterward repeated and to a certain degree consecrated by the Council of Florence, St. Thomas expresses the effects of this divine nourishment: *Sustentat, auget, reparat, delectat.* All that is done for corporal life by meat and drink—that is, the sustaining of life, the promoting of its growth, the repairing of loss and the giving of delight,—all this is done for spiritual life by this sacrament (3, q. 79, a. 1).

First of all, it sustains our spiritual life. The ancient figures announced the Eucharist as the bread of the strong: it is likened to the manna which fed the Chosen People in the desert (Exod. XVI, 14); to the bread in the strength of which Elias walked forty days to the Mount of God (III Kings XIX, 1-8).

[1] Cf. Calmes, *L'Evangile selon St. Jean*, Paris, 1904, pp. 111-147, and pp. 240-259. Cf. Lebreton, *Origines du dogme de la Trinité*, Paris, 1910, pp. 374-381. Cf. Batiffol, *L'Eucharistie*, 1913, pp. 81-90.

Through our union with the immolated Christ we become more attached to things divine, stronger to fight against the flesh and to crucify it with its vices and concupiscences, more terrible to the demons, since they now see within us Him who destroyed their power.

In the second place, it strengthens and increases our spiritual growth. *Christum . . . adoremus qui se manducantibus dat spiritus pinguedinem (Offic. SS. Sacramenti).* Born on the Cross, our supernatural life is developed especially through the Cross and its Victim: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him" (John VI, 57). Supernatural life consists in charity or union with God; Communion builds up and develops charity by bringing into our bosom the very object of our love.

Again, Communion repairs the waste and damage caused in our spiritual life either by our daily venial sins or by our natural propensity to evil. By quickening the fervor of charity the Holy Eucharist takes away the guilt of venial sin. The same intensity of charity diminishes all evil propensities, whether these come from the bodily passions or from spiritual selfishness. For not only does the Eucharist, by increasing grace and divine love in the soul, weaken our egoistic tendencies, but even, according to the Fathers, the contact of the Host of all purity has a kind of healing and sanctifying effect on our flesh.

Lastly, the Holy Eucharist brings joy to the heart. *Panem de cœlo præstitisti eis, omne delectamentum in se habentem (Offic. SS. Sacr.).* The Fathers insist frequently on the spiritual delight and holy inebriation which accompany Communion. The nourishment which we take for the sustaining of our natural strength brings new life and warmth to the blood, and, as a consequence, refreshes and rejoices our whole being. This gladdening warmth is especially the effect of wine, *in jucunditatem creatum*, to quote Ecclesiasticus (XXXI, 35). The Body and Blood of Christ, partaken of in the Eucharistic banquet, cause also warmth and delight in the soul. Ordinarily, the delight is purely spiritual, consisting in the ease, swiftness, and completeness of charity; the heart is strongly drawn to Christ and to divine things; difficulties and sacrifices are no longer feared; we are borne along by grace itself toward fervent acts of love, gratitude, and oblation. Such is the common form of the joy caused by Holy Communion in the soul. At times, however, even sensible sweetness accompanies the reception of Christ's Body and Blood. The Fourth Book of the Imitation realistically describes, not only the spiritual delight of fervor, but also the sensible sweetness felt by devout and loving souls. And the saints tell us how Holy Communion brings them to the borderland between earth and heaven, how it is for them the foretaste of eternal happiness.

Sensible sweetness is, however, a special favor granted by God, for wise purposes, oftentimes to beginners in spiritual experience, but more commonly

to souls exceptionally pure and fervent. We should not feel sad or even surprised if such favors be not granted to us. But what must we think if we be entire strangers even to spiritual joy, if we find only coldness and distractions in our Communions and thanksgivings? This may be our own fault. Too often, unjustified or selfish worries, habitual dissipation of mind, the presence of deliberate venial sin, some too natural attachment, prevent us from feeling the fervor and spiritual joy of Holy Communion. Yet, for our consolation and reassurance in the midst of distractions and coldness, we must remember that sometimes, also, without our fault, physical infirmity, fatigue, absorbing occupations, or the duties of our state so overburden the soul or bind our faculties as to render us invincibly dry, distracted, and cold. Besides, at times, God Himself may wish to try us by withdrawing from us all sensible devotion. Finally, be it remarked here that joy unalloyed is not for earth; the purest gladness of this world too often ends in a sigh. And this mixture of sweetness and love with sorrow is particularly the law of the Eucharistic Communion. There, indeed, we taste the bread of angels but under the symbols, and in the spirit, of immolation.[1]

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The effects of the Eucharistic Host pass beyond

[1] On the four nourishing effects of Communion. Cf. *Imit. of Christ*, Book IV, especially Chap. XI, XIII, XIV, XV. Cf. St. Thomas, 3, q. 79, a. 1, 4, 5. Cf. De Lugo, *De Euch.*, D. XII, nn. 83, 85, 87, 94. Cf. chiefly Hedley, *The Holy Eucharist*, pp. 120-128.

the bounds of earth. Our spiritual life here it nourishes in a wonderful manner, but it does more; for it brings the soul to its consummation in the perfect participation of things divine in the intuitive vision and in beatific love. When Jesus comes to us, He brings with Him an emblem, a title, a pledge of life eternal. This we find in His own promise: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life" (John VI, 55). He who communicates, has already, according to the text, life eternal. This life he has, for in the holy table he finds a symbol full of hope which promises him an eternal banquet in his Father's mansion; this life he has, for with the Host he receives a legal title which confers on him a strict right to his heavenly inheritance; this life he has, for the Host and the Chalice are the pledges or tokens of his future possession of all that was purchased for him by the Blood of Christ.

Communion is a symbol of the eternal banquet, a living efficacious symbol which prepares us for the final realization and leads us naturally to it.

Heavenly happiness is represented as a banquet (Matt. VIII, 11; Luke XII, 37). Jesus wished that the Last Supper should be a veritable feast in order that He might there picture to His Apostles the joy of the eternal feast in heaven. The symbol is living and efficacious; for at this repast we eat the Paschal Lamb, who not only is a sign of freedom from bondage and of future salvation, but in reality delivers us from the slavery of sin, and passes us in safety over

the Red Sea of the world to the Promised Land of heaven. "For Christ our pasch is sacrificed" (I Cor. V, 7); "with desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you, before I suffer. For I say to you, that from this time I will not eat it, till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God" (Luke XXII, 15, 16). "In that Kingdom of happiness," writes Bossuet in paraphrase of this text, "My Passover will have been accomplished, for I shall have left the world and will have come to My Father. But My Passover is also yours; since you are My members you must pass where I have passed. Eat then the Passover-victim, eat My Body and pass with Me to God. Begin now by going to Him in spirit, for one day you will go to Him in your very person. . . . Then will the Passover be consummated in you as it will be soon in Me; you will pass beyond to My glory; your body clothed in immortality will come there with your soul; and all together, the head with the members, we will enjoy what we have won by our transition. And there will be nothing more left for us to desire in the perfect accomplishment of our Pasch." [1]

Communion is not only a symbol of happiness to come; it is also a title which gives us a strict right to our heavenly inheritance.

This right comes from the blood shed on the Cross: "By his own blood (Christ) entered once into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption. . . .

[1] Bossuet, *Méditations sur l'Evangile,* Cène, 1e p., 18e jour. Cf. ibid., 52e and 53e jours.

And therefore he is the mediator of the New Testament" (Heb. IX, 12, 15). By His Blood Christ consummated the Redemption; He opened the door to the Sanctuary of heaven, there to put us in possession of the good things promised in the New Covenant. It is entirely fitting that the Blood of Jesus should be called "the blood of the Testament," for it is through this Blood that the divine will to open heaven again, is made efficacious; it is the title, the authentic act, containing or attesting that will. Through the other sacraments, indeed, the Blood of Christ, so far as its value for salvation is concerned, is sufficiently applied to us, so that, thanks to them, we can lay claim to heaven; but nowhere is this Blood applied to us and given to us directly as it is in the Blessed Sacrament, for in this sacrament it is placed in our hands as the very title to heaven. Literally speaking, in Communion the Blood of the New Testament is shed for us, as St. Matthew and St. Mark expressly state: "This is my blood of the new testament which shall be shed for many" (Mark XIV, 24; Math. XXVI, 28). More clearly still do St. Luke and St. Paul express the same thought, for they call the Eucharistic Cup itself the "Testament": "This is the chalice the new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you" (Luke XXII, 20; I Cor. XI, 25). "This is my Blood of the New Testament; that is, the Blood shed in order to give that Testament its full force. . . . The instrument of this Testament, the deed on which it is written, is the Eucharist. . . . 'This chalice is the New Testament in my blood'; as if we were to say:

just as this paper on which my father wrote his last will with his own hand is his testament, so also this sacred chalice is the Testament of Christ Jesus through His Blood which it contains." [1]

Communion is not only a title to eternal life; it is, further, a pledge which puts us in a manner in possession of our celestial inheritance.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, faith is called "the substance of things to be hoped for." Here the word "substance" means the principle, the commencement, or, better still, the foretaste and radical possession of the good things to come. It is not too much, then, to say that through faith we already possess fundamentally the happiness which we expect. This general definition or attribute of faith is realized preeminently in the Eucharistic mystery: for this mystery not only places before us a truth to be believed, a future good to be hoped for; it gives us the very object of the truth, the substance of the good. Hidden, indeed, the substance is beneath the sacramental veils. But it matters not; under these veils we possess it none the less, for there the Almighty gives Himself to us whole and entire. Hidden from our gaze as He is, we do not see His glory, we do not taste His sweetness; but we partake nevertheless of the same God whom the saints delight in seeing face to face in the intuitive and beatific vision. The same God who is the light and joy of the elect in heaven, gives life and strength to His chosen ones on earth through the bread of angels.

[1] Bossuet, *Méditations sur l'Evangile,* Cène, 1e p., 61e and 62e jours. Ibid., 25e jour.

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Lastly, in our Communion with Jesus, our body itself receives an earnest of glorious resurrection.

"He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day" (John VI, 55). In the primitive liturgies, beginning with the *Didache*, as also in many of the Fathers, for instance in St. Ignatius, St. Irenæus, St. Justin, Tertullian, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Cyril of Alexandria, this text is taken to mean that the Flesh of Christ has a real physical influence on the body of the communicant. According to many of these Fathers, man, poisoned by sin, is doomed to death, but Communion is "the antidote which prevents his dying eternally; the remedy which induces immortality;" the sacred Flesh of Christ, now risen from the dead, when united and incorporated in some manner with the flesh of the communicant, like a superior life-giving element bestows on the whole body a power or germ of resurrection.

For a long time there could be found in the various liturgies notable traces of this belief; and today its impress may perhaps still be seen in certain formulas of the Roman Missal and Ritual. It went so far that in some churches, about the beginning of the Middle Ages, we see creeping in, the abuse of placing a consecrated Host in the mouth or on the breast of the dead as a leaven of resurrection. Lastly, in modern times, some theologians, among whom we find Thomassin and Contenson, and today Lebreton, still hold that the Flesh of Christ

brings with it the physical germ of future life.[1]

These various interpretations seem to go far beyond the literal sense of the words spoken by our Savior. He, indeed, affirmed the fact of resurrection, at the same time indicating a certain connection between it and Communion; but there is nothing to prove that He meant this connection to be taken in the sense of a physical influence. On the contrary, if we examine the text in its setting, that is, in the general thesis concerning the Bread of Life, we see that there is nothing more meant than a simple connection in the moral order. Already, in speaking of those who would unite themselves to Him through faith, Jesus had used absolutely similar expressions: "That every one who seeth the Son, and believeth in him, may have life everlasting, and I will raise him up in the last day" (John VI, 40). Evidently, it cannot be said that faith has a physical influence on the resurrection of the body. It is only a question of the recompense promised to faith: those who, believing in Him, unite themselves to Him, Jesus will raise up to eternal life on the last day. Developing this idea, our Savior comes naturally to that perfect union of faith consummated in those who partake of

[1] For the "Old Monuments and Liturgies," cf. Wilpert, *Le Pitture delle Catacombe romane*, Roma, 1905, Chap. XV, p. 260, and Chap. XVI, pp. 284, 285. Cf. *Dict. d'archéol. chrét.*, Dom Cabrol, 1914, word "Communion," col. 2445. Cf. also, *Book of Common Prayer:* "Distribution of the Communion." For the "Ancient Fathers," cf. Batiffol, *L'Eucharistie*, f. i., pp. 29, 30, 44, 68, 69, 182, 183, 213, etc. Tixeront, *History of Dogmas*, St. Louis, 1911, I, pp. 130, 226, 239, etc. For the "Modern Theologians," cf. Thomassin, *De Inc. Verbi*, B. X, Chap. XXI. Lebreton, *Origines du dogme de la Trinité*, p. 404.

the Eucharistic table; and consequently He promises, still more expressly, to raise up to eternal happiness all those who, by eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood, have united themselves to Him in the most intimate manner possible: "He that eateth my flesh . . . I will raise him up in the last day. . . . He that eateth my flesh . . . abideth in me, and I in him" (John VI, 55-57).

On this idea as expressed in St. John theologians commonly rest. Jesus, they say, will feel Himself moved, and in a manner morally obliged, to raise up to eternal glory this body which, by the material eating of the Eucharistic bread, has allowed Him to be united in a manner so intimate with the just and well-beloved soul, and which also has become *as though His very own* through His presence, at once sacramental and spiritual, in the communicant: "(he) abideth in me and I in him." [1]

But without speaking of physical influence, of a remedy against death, of a germ or leaven of resurrection, or at least, without taking these expressions in their literal sense if we use them at all, can we not admit another influence of Communion, direct and positive too, on our glorious resurrection? If the ancient Fathers go too far in their material interpretation of the words of Christ, modern theologians do not seem to go far enough. There is perhaps a middle way between these two extremes. Let us remember that in St. Paul's theology the glorious resurrection of the dead has its proof, its principle,

[1] Cf. De Lugo, *De Eucharistia*, D. X., n. 102. Cf. chiefly Batiffol, *L'Eucharistie*, Ed. of 1906, pp. 92-95.

its "first-fruits" in the Resurrection of Jesus triumphant over sin. "But now Christ is risen from the dead, the first-fruits of them that sleep: For by a man came death, and by a man the resurrection of the dead. And as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive" (I Cor. XV, 20-22). Baptism, in burying us in death with Christ, already gives us a right and a title to become participants in His Resurrection for eternal glory. "All we, who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in his death. . . . For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death; we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. VI, 3-5). But when we come to the Eucharist, in which we eat the Flesh of Jesus who was dead and rose again for us, in which we make our own the Victim that triumphed over sin and death, can we not say that this sacrament bestows upon us a new positive title, a more assured pledge, a more powerful principle of bodily resurrection in glory?

It seems as if it were necessary here to complete St. John by St. Paul. At least so Bossuet seemed to think, for this he has done. Accordingly, in spite of certain metaphorical expressions, which would be a little too strong if taken in the meaning given to them by the ancient Fathers, he appears to have spoken better than anybody else on the question of the connection between Holy Communion and our resurrection: "Has the Body of Christ," he says, "nothing to do in ours? Is it not the flesh which lusts against the spirit? And what can better allay its fire than the Body of Christ applied to it? . . .

Must not this mortal body, putting off corruption, come forth some day from the tomb? And what can help it better to do this than that Body which knew not corruption? To make us, in the words of St. Paul, one spiritual body with Christ, what can be more efficacious than the union of His Body with ours and the impressing upon us of His divine qualities?" "Let us here consider the Body of the Savior as the sweet Viaticum of the dying. I am dying, my senses are failing, my life is going out. . . . My Savior, Your Body is brought to me, that immortal Body, that spiritualized Body; I receive it in mine. . . . He who eats My Flesh, You say, I will raise him up on the last day. In this dead body there will remain a germ of life which no corruption can ever change; there will remain an impress of life which nothing can ever efface. . . . I do not fear death at all; why should I fear evil when I have ever its antidote near me? Without You, death is an unbearable yoke; with You, it is a remedy, a passage to life. . . . O Lord, keep me safe until I yield up my last sigh. . . . And what shall become of this body of mine? Behold it united to Yours. Through Your risen Body I shall rise again entirely renewed; I shall relinquish to earth only my mortality. In this hope I live . . . in it I die." [1]

[1] Bossuet, *Méditations sur l'Evangile,* Cène, 1e p., 50e et 51e jours.

CHAPTER V.

Communion and Immolation with Christ.

In the Eucharist, Jesus renews the sacrifice of the Cross in order to incorporate us with His death. This He does by uniting us to the Host, which is the Bread of divine and eternal Life only insomuch as it consummates in us the immolation begun by faith and baptism.

In the pages of a well-known writer on Positive Theology, we find the remark that "the Pauline idea of Communion with Jesus formally as victim of the sacrifice is destined to remain ever in the background as far as Christian piety is concerned; for the latter will always be more attracted by the idea of St. John, that Communion is a participation of life divine: 'He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life.' Confirmed by its own experience, Christian devotion in taking up the idea of St. John will have the intuition of a reality more striking than any represented by a sacrificial Communion." [1]

It is true, indeed, that St. Paul sees the Eucharist primarily as the sacrament of our Savior's death. In his mind the foremost effect of Communion is that it incorporates us to the sacrifice of the Cross. St. John, on the other hand, gives us something far beyond this; he immediately shows us in clear-cut

[1] Batiffol, *L'Eucharistie*, Ed. of 1906, p. 52.

phrase, reinforced by repetition, the final object of Communion: the nourishing of the life of grace within us, our glorious resurrection, life eternal. But in reality there is here only a difference of point of view, which, besides, extends to the entire dogma of supernatural life: both Apostles insist on one of the two aspects of the same mystery, our divine life in Christ.

True it is, also, that the tradition of the first centuries clings almost exclusively to the Johannine idea. In the preceding chapter we have seen to what length of physical realism the Fathers pushed the interpretation of the text which bears on the relation between Holy Communion and our bodily resurrection. When they treat of the effects on the soul, they center all on the idea of eternal life or deification. Liturgy also bears the impress of those times, for it speaks especially of "the heavenly Bread," of the Body of Our Lord "preserving the soul for life eternal." To be convinced of this we need but read the prayers in the Roman canon, that venerable witness to the religious inspiration of early ages.

But can it be said in such an absolute manner that "the Pauline idea of a sacrificial Communion is destined to remain ever in the background as far as Christian piety is concerned"? Does it not rather seem nearer the truth to say that, on this point, Christian thought and Christian piety have gradually evolved and progressed with the unfolding of a general movement which has taken place through the centuries in Catholic devotion toward the Person of Our Lord. The early Fathers seem to venerate above

all else the Word as the principle of salvation and deification. St. Augustine, St. Leo, St. Gregory the Great, in their teachings give more room to the sacred humanity, to the "historic Christ" as some would say. Later on, St. Anselm, St. Bernard, the *Movement* which first inspired the Crusades, St. Francis of Assisi, and St. Thomas are the agents or the witnesses of progress in the devotion to Jesus crucified and to Jesus in the Eucharist. The manifestation of the Sacred Heart in modern times continues and consummates this progressive movement. In the general evolution outlined above, the Pauline idea of Communion with Jesus, formally considered as the victim of the Cross, or in other words, the idea of our incorporation with the Passion through the partaking of the victim, seems to have moved in lines parallel with the progress of the devotion to the Cross and the Eucharist. The development of the Pauline idea is already set in bold relief by St. John Damascene (*De Fide orth.*, IV, 13). Still more clearly placed in view is this idea in the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas (3, q. 73, a. 4, a. 5; q. 78, a. 3; q. 79, a. 1, etc.). And when, in the office of the Blessed Sacrament, the angelic Doctor resumes the entire Eucharistic dogma in the antiphon now so popular, *O sacrum convivium in quo Christus sumitur, recolitur memoria Passionis ejus, mens impletur gratia, et futuræ gloriæ nobis pignus datur*, he intimately unites the idea of Communion with the Cross, with that other idea of grace and eternal life: the sacred banquet confers on us the gift of grace and the assurance of future glory only by inculcating

the remembrance of the Passion; and this is a practical remembrance by which we announce the Savior's death. Another testimony which shows us Christian piety uniting the Pauline and Johannine ideas, we have in the Fourth Book of the Imitation: "As I willingly offered Myself to God My Father for thy sins, with My hands stretched out upon the Cross, and My body naked, so that nothing remained in Me, which was not turned into a sacrifice, to appease the divine wrath: Even so must thou willingly offer thyself to Me daily in the Mass, for a pure and holy oblation. . . ." (Imit. Book IV, Chap. VIII. Cf. also Chap. V, n. 3). It is unnecessary here to recall how those who in the seventeenth century restored priestly piety, Olier, Condren and others, insisted on the obligation of becoming victims with Jesus. Unnecessary likewise to bring back to mind that the Sacred Heart asked from Blessed Margaret Mary a love of reparation and immolation toward the Eucharist. And is not Bossuet rightly called the incomparable Doctor of the Eucharistic mystery simply because he is first of all the sublime teacher of our incorporation through Communion with Jesus crucified? Rarely does he speak of the Holy Eucharist without bringing in the conclusion that we must, in the sentiment of union with the death of Christ, offer our soul and body as living victims, if we wish to become fully Christian through our Communions, and in particular, if we wish to participate in the eternal fruits of the Cross.

In order, therefore, to explain the full dogma of our divine life in Christ as it was first revealed by

the two inspired Doctors of the supernatural and as it was afterward evolved through the centuries by the piety of the Church, we must combine St. Paul's teaching with that of St. John.

In the preceding chapter, guided chiefly by St. John, we have seen how Holy Communion is, after baptism and faith, the supreme means to engraft us on the Word, the Son of God who is "made flesh" to become the principle of our divine and eternal life. In the present chapter, following particularly St. Paul, we will attempt to show that Holy Communion, after baptism and faith, is the means of divine and eternal life only because it incorporates us to the death of the Lord.

I.

In the Old Testament, the ceremony of Circumcision, by which incorporation with the People of God was effected, was a rite of sacred immolation. The seal of justice and faith, *Signaculum justitiæ fidei* (Rom. IV, 11), the title which gave admission to the chosen race was stamped in blood. In the New Dispensation also, the sacrament of baptism and the virtue of faith, which make up our supernatural initiation, are principles of life only because they are in some way connected with immolation. Those who are baptized and those who believe are by their vocation and state in life, that is, by virtue of their very baptism and faith, closely bound to the Cross of Christ. This is the price of resurrection and eternal life. Our every right to salvation comes from the sacrifice of Jesus, who triumphed over sin

and death; those alone will benefit from this sacrifice, who, crucifying their flesh and destroying the sin that is within them, incorporate themselves with this death which leads to a glorious resurrection.

It will be well here, in spite of their length, to cite the very texts of St. Paul which bear on this question. It may be useful to do so if only to show the true place and the true character of Holy Communion. For the Eucharist, as developments brought forth in the course of the preceding chapter clearly imply, consummates the work of faith and baptism, and crowns the present dispensation of immolation and life in Jesus crucified.

"Know you not that all we, who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in his death? For we are buried together with him by baptism into death; that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, to the end that we may serve sin no longer. . . . So do you also reckon that you are dead to sin, but alive unto God, in Christ Jesus our Lord. . . . But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end life everlasting. . . ." (Rom. VI). "And if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; he that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead, shall quicken also your mortal bodies. . . . For if you live according to the

flesh, you shall die; but if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live. For whosoever are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God. . . . And if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: yet so, if we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him" (Rom. VIII, 11-17). "For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ. . . . For you are all one in Christ Jesus. . . . And they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences" (Gal. III, 26-29; V, 24). "Furthermore, I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things. . . . that I may gain Christ: and may be found in him, not having my justice . . . but that which is of the faith of Christ Jesus. . . . That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death" (Philip III, 8-12). "As therefore you have received Jesus Christ the Lord walk ye in him; rooted and built up in him, and confirmed in the faith. . . . Beware lest any man cheat you by philosophy, and vain deceit . . . not according to Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead corporally. . . . In whom also you are circumcised with circumcision not made by hand . . . but in the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, in whom also you are risen again by the faith of the operation of God. . . . For you are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in

God. When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth . . ." (Col. II, 6-23; III, 1-25).

So far does St. Paul push his theory of our incorporation with the Cross through baptism and faith, that he applies to the daily life and good works of Christians the very same terms which the liturgy reserves for sacrifice: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice (θυσίαν) holy, pleasing unto God" (Rom. XII, 1). "That I should be the minister of Christ Jesus among the gentiles; sanctifying the gospel of God, that the oblation (προσφορα) of the gentiles may be made acceptable and sanctified in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. XV, 16). "And if I be made a victim upon the sacrifice (θυσία) and service of your faith, I rejoice and congratulate with you all" (Philip. II, 17). In conclusion we quote the words of Bossuet who well sums up the doctrine of St. Paul on this subject: "Christ Jesus, in order to be the Savior of the human race, wished to be its victim. But on account of the unity existing between Him and His mystical body, it follows that, since the head has been sacrificed, all the members must in their turn become living victims." [1]

II.

The Eucharistic Communion is the consummation of our baptismal initiation and the supreme exercise

[1] Bossuet, *Premier sermon pour la Purification de la S. Vierge,* (Vivès, XI, 246). On the same theme cf. Prat, *Théologie de St. Paul,* I, pp. 308-312, and II, pp. 333-335 and 368-379.

of our faith in Jesus our Savior, precisely because it expresses more clearly, and imposes upon us more energetically, the law of Christian immolation. It is in this mystery especially that the virtue of the Cross is active, for it is the sacrifice of Jesus Himself renewed for and with His mystical body. "The death of Jesus is ever before us in the Eucharist . . . after the separation of His Body and Blood; the impression of Christ's death should be felt by all the faithful, who, in imitation of the Son of God, should make themselves His victims. Contained in this mystery is the entire virtue of the Cross. . . . And what is this virtue? 'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself' (John XII, 32). The result has confirmed these words; to Jesus crucified all hearts have come; such is the virtue of the Cross. This virtue is found all living in the Eucharist. . . . There is contained the efficaciousness of the Cross to draw all hearts to Jesus, there His power to make us live in Him." [1]

The words of St. Paul vividly place before us the source from which the Eucharist draws this mysterious virtue of attracting all to the Cross: "The Lord Jesus," says the Apostle, "the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks broke, and said: Take ye, and eat: this is my body which shall be delivered for you: this do for the commemoration of me. In like manner also the chalice, after he had supped, saying: This chalice is the new

[1] Bossuet, *Méditations sur l'Evangile*, Cène, 1e p., 46e jour. Idem, 19e jour.

testament in my blood: this do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of me. For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall shew the death of the Lord, until he come" (I Cor. XI, 23-26). The Eucharist is the memorial of the Savior's death. Jesus recommends us to renew the Last Supper and to enter into communion with it by bringing to mind the circumstances connected with His sacrifice. But that it is not a question of a mere memorial and nothing more can be seen from the words, "For as often as you shall eat this bread . . . you shall shew forth the death of the Lord." "To shew" here signifies to recall, to celebrate, to renew, the death of Our Lord, by eating His Body as broken and immolated, by drinking His Blood as shed, by communicating with the sacrifice formally as a sacrifice, and consequently, by entering into His very sentiments of death and immolation.

Clearer still speaks the same Apostle when he warns the Corinthians to shun the service of idols (I Cor. X, 14-21). His argument is founded on the absolute incompatibility which exists between the Eucharistic Communion and the communion with the idolatrous sacrifices. "You cannot drink the chalice of the Lord, and the chalice of devils; you cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord, and of the table of devils" (I Cor. X, 20-21). On the argument itself we need not dwell here. Suffice it to point out the doctrine of union through sacrifice which is supposed, or rather expressly stated, all through this reasoning of St. Paul. As those who eat of the

flesh immolated to idols enter into the most intimate union or communion, not precisely with the victims themselves or with the idols, since both victims and idols are really nothing, but with the devils, to whom the heathen sacrifices are really offered (I Cor. X, 19-20); and as Israel eating of the victims of the Law were made "partakers of the altar," that is, entered intimately into the worship of the Old Testament (18); so now, those who receive the Holy Eucharist enter into the most intimate union with the Body and Blood of Christ, mystically separated: "The chalice of benediction, which we bless, is it not the *communion* of the blood of Christ? And the bread, which we break, is it not the *partaking* of the body of the Lord?" (16). Not only the aim and the direction of his argument, but also the very terms used by the Apostle, manifest that he means to assert the existence of the most intimate union or unity between the one who communicates and the Body and Blood separated in the Eucharistic sacrifice. The Latin words of the Vulgate, *communicatio*, *participatio*, as also the English words "communion, partaking," do not render the full force of the Greek word *κοινωνία*, which really means unity or a making one with the Body and Blood of Christ. Therefore, from the very terms used by St. Paul, as well as from his general thesis, we may conclude that, in his estimation, Communion amalgamates or identifies us, so to speak, with Jesus in His state of victim. It works our salvation, our sanctification, our deification, but only because it incorporates us with the sacrifice of Christ.

The doctrine of St. Paul on this point, as we have already hinted, is but an application of the general theory concerning Communion. The eating of the victim was always considered as uniting the communicants with this victim. The word itself is clear: *to communicate* is *to be, or to become one* with the victim as such; to offer oneself, to immolate oneself spiritually. If we intend, then, to obtain the fruits of sacrifice in Communion while we have no intention of sacrificing ourselves, if we wish to be deified by the Host while we refuse to be immolated with it, we are nothing less than parasites of the altar, we seek salvation outside the way of the Cross, we confound the Eucharistic table with the heavenly banquet.

In heaven alone, the place of perfect holiness, does the Victim of the Cross appear clothed in glory; there only is the sacrifice consummated in beatific adoration and communion. On earth, with its trials and its sin, with its necessity of penance and expiation, the Savior is still presented to our eyes shrouded in death; here the sacrifice of Jesus, our Head, is renewed so that it may spread abroad and be completed by the immolation of His mystic body in Communion. Jesus cannot now be sacrificed in reality; but He comes before us surrounded by the symbols of death so that He may apply to His mystical body the immolating virtue of the Cross. The faithful unite themselves to His intentions when they offer themselves with Him during the Holy Sacrifice, but especially, when, at the moment of Communion, they offer Him their flesh to be crucified with its vices and concupiscences, when they bring their whole life

with its labors, its sufferings, and its prayers to be penetrated with His victimal spirit. Then is brought home to them in full realization the meaning of the very words of Jesus concerning the effects of Communion: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him. . . . He that eateth me, the same also shall live by me" (John VI, 57, 58). Through this union, the communicant, entering, so to say, into the interior life and virtues of Jesus, surrenders to the Savior his own life of sin and selfishness that Christ may dwell henceforth and live in him. Thus will the holiness of Jesus come in contact with our misery to sanctify it; thus will the love of Jesus be opposed to our self-love to hold it in check; thus will the spirit of Jesus penetrate and transform our entire being.[1] So true, so real is all this that the perfect communicant can in very truth say with St. Paul: "With Christ I am nailed to the cross. And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me . . . who loved me, and delivered himself for me" (Gal. II, 19, 20).

[1] Cf. Hedley, o. c., pp. 113-115.

CHAPTER VI.

Our Eucharistic Teaching.

To the entire Christian people we should preach the substantial theology of Communion; that is, its natural place in their sacrifice. But to the select few, to the pious souls, either living in the world or following the religious life, we should reveal the mystery of the altar in its entirety. Leaving aside all imagination and theory we should preach the real virtues of Jesus in the Eucharist: His love for the Father and for us together with His religion and perfect humility; we should also bring before the people the lessons of self-immolation directly intended by our Savior in the symbolism of death under which He is given to us.

I.

Few there are among us, perhaps, who completely neglect or ignore the Blessed Eucharist. But how many of the faithful see in it hardly anything more than a form of words: they speak of "making their Easter duty," of "receiving their God before dying," but they miss the grand and rich significance of the very words they use. What a wealth of meaning lies hidden in the expression "Easter duty;" for it stands for our obligation to eat of the Lamb who delivered His people, to partake of the Victim who leads us to our true home, to eat of the Bread of eter-

nal Life! And again, what sweetness and depth of meaning in the words "to receive our God before dying;" that is, to be sacrificed at the last moment with Jesus our Victim, to expiate our sins on the Cross and thus to enter the heavenly consummation! How beautiful is all this, how full of light and Christian life! And yet, for the great mass of Christians the ray of supernatural light that falls upon them from these living words is, at best, but faint and cold and pale. To satisfy our Easter duty or to help us to die well, this feeble gleam, strictly speaking, will suffice. The living faith of the Church and the merits of Jesus make up for the lack of understanding, for the religious inefficiency of so many poor ignorant Christians, who have just light enough and good will enough to know and to fulfil conscientiously the law of Easter Communion, to know and to desire sincerely eternal happiness with God in heaven. But if they were better instructed, their Communions would be more frequent and more fruitful. Their Easter duty and Viaticum would unite them more intimately with Jesus in life as well as in death.

The theology of Communion is not too high for the general run of Christians. It is only the synthesis and the crowning of the principal truths of Christianity: the Incarnation, the Redemption through the sacrifice of the Cross, the renewal of this sacrifice in the Eucharist, our partaking of the victim in order to be offered with Jesus and to live in Him here as well as in heaven. That is all. Whoever is incapable of understanding something of these fundamental truths is hardly capable of being a

Christian. Can we say that the Host is the Bread of Life prepared by Jesus for all, and yet admit that in this supreme gift of love He cannot be understood; can we assert that the entire Christian generation is like the people of Capharnaum, powerless to comprehend the words of eternal life? Assuredly not. The Christian people can well understand the things which Jesus has spoken for them. The true doctrine of the Blessed Eucharist is the life and the salvation of the faithful; they need this teaching and to it they have every right.

Let us preach to the people the excellence of the sacrifice of the Mass; and let us show them the place which Communion has in that sacrifice, the natural, the essential place, not indeed as a formal element entering the very constitution of the sacrifice itself—very few theologians have said this—but as the normal and necessary consummation of such a sacrifice. Essential it certainly is in the sense that the sacrifice of the Mass being instituted under the appearances of bread and wine is naturally and necessarily ordained to be terminated by Communion; essential it also is in the incontestable sense that Jesus in instituting the Blessed Eucharist meant above all else to offer His Body and Blood in sacrifice for us and to give them to us in Communion. "Take ye and eat: This is my body. . . . Drink ye all of this: for this is my blood," are Christ's own words (Math. XXVI, 26-28). Whoever, therefore, attends Mass without communicating, fails in some way to respond to the wishes and the invitation of our Lord, fails to obtain the full share this loving

Savior had prepared for him in His sacrifice.[1]

II.

The earnest wish of Christ when He instituted this divine Sacrament, was solemnly recalled to the Church by the Council of Trent, which said in reference to Communion: "The Holy Synod would desire that at every Mass the faithful who are present should communicate, not only spiritually, by way of internal affection, but sacramentally by the actual reception of the Eucharist" (Sess. XXII, Chap. VI). Quite recently the Vicar of Christ, our late well-beloved Pontiff, Pius X, in a special and well-known Decree placed the seal of his approval on the practice of frequent, even daily, Communion. This salutary practice he recommends to all the faithful, but especially to those who live in religious communities, in seminaries, and in Catholic colleges.[2]

In the same Decree, priests are reminded that "they are frequently, and with great zeal, to exhort the faithful to this devout and salutary practice of daily reception of the Holy Eucharist." Indeed, of themselves the faithful will not dare to communicate frequently; left to themselves, they will not know how to profit by the great Sacrament. Only when they are conducted there by the priest will they come to the holy table. Only when they are enlightened by the priest will they communicate with fruit.

While we persuade the people to take up the prac-

[1] Cf. Bossuet, *Méditations sur l'Evangile,* Cène, 1e p., 64e jour.

[2] Cf. *Decr. SS. Cong. Concilii,* 20 Dec., 1905, "De quotidiana SS. Eucharistiæ sumptione."

tice of daily or frequent Communion, we must bring before them the necessity of having that "right and devout intention" required by the Decree of Pius X: "No one who is in a state of grace and who approaches the holy table with a right and devout intention, can lawfully be hindered therefrom. A right intention consists in this: that he who approaches the holy table should do so, not out of routine or vain glory or human respect, but for the purpose of pleasing God, of being more closely united with Him by charity, and of seeking this divine remedy for his weaknesses and defects." Most carefully should the priests whose charge it is to direct pious souls in the practice of frequent or daily Communion watch over them to prevent the creeping in of routine and custom with their baneful effects, which would finally lead them to give no more thought or preparation to Holy Communion than to the daily exercises prescribed by their rule. Herein the danger lies. To obviate this difficulty will be the priest's care if he realizes that the fulfilment of the desires expressed in the Decree implies the obligation to instruct and dispose the people for the better reception of the Sacrament, so that they may be made more and more capable of understanding the meaning of the Host they receive, and of living their lives in accordance with it. The Decree itself, which ought to begin a new era in Christian piety, will not produce its full effects unless the priest is unsparing in instructing and directing those souls who aspire to frequent or daily Communion; instructing them in all that pertains to the mystery of the altar, direct-

ing them along the road which leads to immolation with Jesus crucified.[1]

In our preaching it is well to insist on the words containing the promise and the institution of the Eucharist; not, indeed, in order to prove the dogma to the faithful—for this they already believe; but to bring before them the divine and vital content of the inspired words. It may be useful, moreover, to show how God in the Blessed Eucharist goes to the extreme limit of His goodness, wisdom, and power, exhausting Himself, as it were, in bestowing upon us this prodigious gift. A word on the theological virtues also, and the manner of progressing in them, will not be out of place: on faith, which is here brought face to face with the entire Christian dogma synthesized, concrete, and living in Jesus; on hope, which through the Flesh and Blood of the Savior takes possession of the divinity itself under mystic veils; on charity, which in the Blessed Sacrament comes in contact with God who is love itself. The best subjects of preaching, however, as also of meditation, especially for the use of pious souls, will be found in the real life, in the actual virtues or dispositions of Jesus on the altar. But that life and those virtues must be viewed in the true light which flows from the Cross; for it is ever under the symbolism of immolation that Jesus manifests Himself, and it is only by renewing His sacrifice that He gives Himself to us in Communion. Let us recall to the minds of the people the true and real Jesus present in the Eu-

[1] Cf. Hedley, o. c., pp. 144-146.

charist; but let us ever insist on the mystical veils of death which enshroud Him, and through which only He wishes to represent and apply to us the merits of the Cross.

Therefore, we will preach to all, but especially to those pious souls who receive daily, or frequent, Communion, the love which burns in the heart of the Eucharistic Christ, His love for the Father, for us, and for the entire human race; we will preach the worship which Jesus continually renders to His Father in deep humility: these are the virtues or dispositions of His real life on our altars. Chiefly, we should preach on the lessons of sacrifice, on the obligation of Christian immolation, so clearly manifested in the symbolism of death intentionally chosen by Christ Himself.

III.

From the spirit of sacrifice spring obedience, patience, poverty, and other virtues; thus indirectly all these virtues are taught us and imposed upon us by the Eucharist. But may we not connect them with the Eucharist itself just as directly as charity, religion, and the spirit of sacrifice are connected with it? In other words, is not the real life of Jesus on our altars, together with the manner in which He there manifests Himself to us, a direct example, and even, a formal lesson of poverty and obedience, of patience in trial, and of humility?

Many preachers and spiritual writers state this as a fact. As an example to be imitated they propose the humiliations suffered by Jesus in the Host,

His privation of all earthly goods, His silence in the face of outrage, His entire abandonment into our hands. They speak as though Jesus were shrunken or lessened within the narrow dimensions of the Host, and reduced to some inexplicable state of inferiority. They refer to Jesus in the Host as though He were still really accessible and sensible to the contact of poverty and suffering, and given up in His very Person to the whims of men.[1] But such ideas are opposed to the commonly accepted doctrine. According to St. Thomas and the best theologians, Jesus exists in the Eucharist as He exists in heaven, absolutely impassible, absolutely happy, and absolutely glorified; no change, no contact which would bring imperfection in its train, can He in reality undergo. He cannot, therefore, really feel humiliation or suffering or the inconvenience of obedience and poverty. Of what use is it, then, to give such examples? Can our piety be touched by virtues which are non-existent?

But some one may say: it is merely a question of words. Those authors speak rhetorically. Their words would indeed lead us to think that Jesus, as present in the Host, suffers some pain or privation; and these words, together with all such oratorical expressions, we must avoid. But while remaining in perfect accord with the language and doctrine of St. Thomas, while expressly recognizing that in the Host the above-mentioned virtues are not formally realized, we think that a very efficacious example may be drawn from the *appearances* under which Our

[1] Cf. f. i., Buathier, *Le Sacrifice,* pp. 117-130.

Lord wished to show Himself to us. *In reality* Jesus no longer feels either sorrow or humiliation or privation, nor does He obey men in the strict sense of the word; but He *appears* to us as though hidden away, and despising all that human glory which fascinates the world; He *appears* to us as if He were in reality poor, and despoiled of all those earthly riches which mean so much to man; *He appears* to us as suffering insults and innumerable sacrileges with infinite patience; He *appears* to us under the sacramental species like a captive abandoned completely to the free disposal of His priests. Is not such *a mode of presence* in the Host, freely chosen as it is by our divine Master, an example pointing out the true road of life, and a living force urging us on the way? It would, then, seem after all that it is both useful and lawful to preach the Eucharistic lessons of poverty, patience, and obedience.

These thoughts cannot but impress us, especially when presented in the graceful poetic style of Faber, in the striking eloquence of Monsabré, or with the penetrating force of Bourdaloue.[1] And yet it is much to be feared that sober reflection will soon destroy this first impression. For, in spite of ourselves, we ask: have the Eucharistic appearances been really and intentionally chosen by Our Lord to teach us patience, poverty, and obedience? And our answer must seemingly be in the negative. By His own words we see that Our Lord under the Eucharistic symbolism intended to show forth His sacrificial

[1] Cf. Faber, *The Blessed Sacrament*, B. I, Chap. IV-VII and Epilogue. Cf. Monsabré, *Dogme Cath.*, 1884, p. 113. Cf. Bourdaloue, *Essai d'Oct. du S. Sac.*

death: "This is my body given for you; this is my blood shed for you." And if it is evident that the symbolism of death tends of itself and by its very institution to teach us and impose upon us the spirit of sacrifice, it is thereby not evident at all that the same symbolism was intended to teach us directly the spoliation of self through poverty, the accepting of pain and humiliation, the renouncing of our own will. True, indeed, the spirit of sacrifice includes all these virtues; and thus, indirectly, they are taught by the Eucharist. This we readily admit, but it is not the point at issue. The question is: did Our Lord choose and institute the Eucharistic symbolism expressly to teach us patience, poverty, and obedience? Assuredly not. The emblems of death were chosen by Christ to represent symbolically His immolation on the Cross; and for that alone. Evidently, since Jesus wished to appear before us as dead, since He wished to give us Himself to be our spiritual food, He must needs lie hidden beneath the sacramental species, He must exist in external appearance as though stripped of everything, subject to outrage and insult, and submissive to our will. But since these appearances, taking into account the reason and the manner of the Eucharistic institution, are necessary, is it legitimate to seek there a lesson intentionally taught by our Savior?

Assuredly, we may believe that Jesus during His mortal life, and especially at the Last Supper, foresaw with sorrow and pain all the outrages to be committed in years to come against the Blessed Sacrament. But this thought does not so much suggest a

lesson as recall the Savior's love, a love which we can never sufficiently meditate. What a striking message is contained for each one of us in this thought: Jesus loved me and delivered Himself up for me! *His love moved Him to immolate Himself under the appearance of bread and wine! At a time when His heart could still suffer, His love caused Him, in spite of outrage and sacrilege, sorrowfully foreseen and bitterly felt, to give Himself for me at the Last Supper!* We acknowledge this love, we feel its every throb in that plan of mystic immolation through which we are to obtain eternal life; we acknowledge this love and we cannot help but be impressed with the indescribable torture it cost our Savior, especially on that night when He delivered Himself to His enemies in order to realize His loving designs. But when we have considered this love, we have seen and explained everything: for the appearances of humiliation, suffering, poverty, and submission are nothing but the consequences or conditions of the realization of this love in the Holy Eucharist.

For lessons of patience, detachment, and obedience, we need not fall back on a far-fetched and indirect example drawn from the Eucharist. A better teacher is at hand in the historical life of Jesus on earth. His entire life, His every word and action, is a teaching ever actual, always admirably adapted to the wants of our souls, never lacking in efficaciousness, and bringing with it its own special grace of imitation. But among all the events of His sojourn on earth the Passion stands prominently forth. There every virtue is actually realized and to the very ex-

treme, and there, also, virtue is realized with the *direct* intention of instructing and attracting us. The obscurity and poverty of Christ's life, the ignominy and sufferings of His death were not absolutely necessary for our redemption; the least act of Jesus, a prayer, a wish, would have been in itself sufficient to save us. If, according to the will of the Father, Jesus chose to go so far on the way of humiliation and suffering, one of the main motives was assuredly that, pointing to His own life, He might be able to say to us: "I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also" (John XIII, 15).

But can we not say, at least, that these examples from the life of Christ would be sweeter and more efficacious if we were to view them and meditate them in the Eucharist itself, as in a permanent memorial divinely instituted both to represent the virtues and mysteries of Jesus and to bring them before us as a living standard of life?

Olier, Thomassin, and other pious writers, try, indeed, to show us in the Holy Eucharist a perpetual memorial, a living representation of all the various mysteries, states, and virtues of Jesus Christ from the Incarnation and Nativity to the Resurrection.[1]

A memorial, indeed, the Eucharist is, a living efficacious memorial instituted by Our Lord Himself: *Hoc facite in meam commemorationem* (Luke XXII, 19; I Cor. XI, 25, 26). But it is precisely through

[1] Olier, *Pietas Seminarii*, nn. 4-9. Cf. Thomassin, *De Inc. Verbi*, Book X, Chap. XVII, n. 12 and Chap. XXVI, n. 13.

fear of weakening the meaning and the sanctifying power of this memorial, such as Christ chose it and wished it to be, that we dare not follow to the end the pious deductions of even such venerated teachers as Olier and Thomassin, when they would show us the *entire* life of Jesus with *all* its mysteries *equally* recalled and *equally* represented in the Eucharist. Did it really and equally enter into the direct intention of Christ when He was about to institute the Blessed Eucharist to make it a permanent memorial of all those mysteries? Certainly not. In the celebration and receiving of the Holy Eucharist St. Paul sees and emphasizes only the recalling of the death of Our Lord: *Mortem Domini annuntiabitis* (I Cor. XI, 26). Echoing the thought of Catholic Tradition, the Council of Trent gives as the reason of the institution of the Eucharist: "That the bloody sacrifice once to be accomplished on the Cross might be represented, and the memory thereof remain even unto the end of the world" (Sess. XXII, Chap. I). In the Collect of the office of the Blessed Sacrament we still speak of a remembrance of the Passion: *Deus qui nobis sub sacramento mirabili Passionis tuæ memoriam reliquisti.* . . . Finally, in the liturgy of the Mass no other mystery is expressly recalled but the Passion, with the Resurrection and Ascension, which are its natural and glorious consummation. As a matter of fact, the sacramental symbolism and the words of consecration speak only of the death of the Lord; and, in its essential form, the Holy Eucharist is nothing else than the sacrifice of the Cross renewed on our altars. When, therefore, we recall the Pas-

sion of Jesus through the Eucharistic symbols, we do so through an objective memorial independent of all supposition. But when we come to the other mysteries of the life of Christ and try to find their remembrance in the Blessed Sacrament, we must necessarily suppose a good deal. It is not Jesus who shows them to us in the Holy Sacrifice, but we ourselves, who, by a pious effort of the imagination, strive to see them there. If, when meditating on the meaning of the Eucharist, we place the Incarnation, the Nativity, and the Passion on the same plane, and if, as a consequence, we see on our altars, indifferently, Jesus the child or the young man, Jesus the workman, poor, humble and humiliated, or Jesus sacrificed on the Cross, do we not run the risk of losing sight of, or depreciating, the memorial of His death, which the Savior Himself at the supreme moment of His life solemnly instituted to incorporate us with the sacrifice of Salvation?

IV.

In our preaching, therefore, when there is question of the mysteries or virtues of the historical life of Christ, let us turn to the pages of the Gospel; we can never sufficiently teach the faithful to have recourse to the Book of Life. If we wish to revive or build up their piety through some memorial which would recall and bring together these various mysteries, let us teach them how to understand and follow with profit the cycle of liturgical feasts instituted by the Church for that purpose. But when we come to the Eucharist, without running the risk of

losing our own way or misleading the faithful in the search for imaginary representations of the many mysteries of the God-Man's life, let us show them Jesus Himself, the Savior, real and living in the great Sacrament; let us represent Him with His loving grace ever ready to hear their prayers and to second the efforts they make each day toward imitating the humility, the detachment, the patience of which His earthly life was such a bright example. Lastly, let us preach, as formally Eucharistic, only those *actual* virtues or dispositions which make up the real life of Christ on our altars as in heaven: love for the Father, love for us individually and for all souls, perfect religion in perfect humility. But let us show that life and those virtues in their *true Eucharistic setting;* that is, through the symbolism of immolation. The light which bursts so brightly from Calvary should illumine our entire Eucharistic preaching, so that the Blessed Sacrament may be for the faithful the living and efficacious memorial of the Savior's death.

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In our Eucharistic preaching let us exhibit the Heart of Jesus burning on our altars with love for His Father and for us. And to this we may add, as a natural corollary, an unwearied insistence on fraternal charity, the symbolism, the principle and the efficacious example of which it has pleased the Sacred Heart to set forth in the Eucharist.

The Heart which loves God with an adequate love is there on the altar. Let us dwell on this thought;

and, possessing ourselves of that love, let us offer it to the Heavenly Father to supply the deficiencies of our poor hearts and make reparation for the forgetfulness and hatred of unfortunate sinners.

That Heart which in its great love for mankind has miraculously manifested itself almost in our own days, as if to make a last supreme effort to save the world, is on our altars. In proclaiming the consecration of the world to the Sacred Heart, Leo XIII, in the Encyclical of March 25, 1899, writes the remarkable and significant words: *In eo omnis collocanda spes; in eo hominis petenda expectandaque salus.* In His revelations to Blessed Margaret Mary, Jesus Himself says no less. "It is the last attempt of my love to save the world," is the striking expression that comes from His lips. Yes! our highest hope of salvation is in the Sacred Heart; and in the Eucharist this Heart is really present, really living for us. There must we go ourselves, there must we lead the souls committed to our care.

The object of this devotion is twofold: the physical Heart of Jesus, and the divine affection or love symbolized by that Heart. On the altar as well as in heaven we find the Heart of Jesus living in His sacred humanity, and personally united to the Word. On the altar as well as in heaven Jesus loves us with His human and divine love, a tender love, a passionate, an infinite love. It was to give to the faithful an unusual opportunity to remember more vividly, and to venerate more fervently, the two great tokens of His love, the Passion and the Blessed Sacrament, that Our Lord asked for a special feast in

honor of His Sacred Heart and that this feast was first granted by Clement XIII to some particular churches and afterward extended by Pius IX to the universal Church.[1] Another link connecting this devotion with the Holy Eucharist is revealed to us when we learn that it was on the altar, during the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, that, between December 27, 1673, and June 16, 1675, there took place the four great manifestations of the Sacred Heart to Blessed Margaret Mary. And, moreover, it is especially to offset the outrage and ingratitude received by Jesus in the Sacrament of His love that He asks of us a devotion of loving reparation.[2] If it were possible for Jesus hidden beneath the Eucharistic veils to suffer, He would certainly be sorrowfully affected by the indifference and sacrilege which He meets with now. Long ago, at the hour of the Last Supper, Jesus foresaw every insult, every outrage that would be offered to the Eucharist to the end of time; and He then suffered indescribable agony in His Heart. But, at the same time, there came up before Him in clear vision the reparations that would be made to His love by pious souls throughout the ages; and, immediately, His outraged love and wounded Heart were comforted and consoled. Now He asks of us to place ourselves among the number of those whose lives of reparation consoled Him in the day of His bitter Eucharistic sorrow. Around the altar the Sacred Heart calls us: there must we seek the object of this devotion of love

[1] Cf. *Officium SS. Cordis Jesu,* Lectio VIa.

[2] Cf. Bainvel, *La dévotion au S. Cœur,* Paris, 1906, pp. 20-32.

and salvation, there shall we find its very home.

The world will not be saved except by reviving the spirit of Christianity; we must renew our faith in God's love for us, *Sic Deus dilexit mundum;* we must renew our love for God and show it by practical obedience, and, if necessary, by sacrifice, *Diliges Dominum tuum ex toto corde tuo.* In a word, God loves us and we should love Him in return: this is complete Christianity. The spirit of Christianity thus understood the Sacred Heart would bring back to the world. Its revelations have for their purpose to render God's infinite love visible and better known, and, as a consequence, to fill man's heart with responsive, obedient, and sacrificing love. This shrine of love is alight on our altars and thither we must bring the faithful. There when they receive into their hearts the Victim of the Cross they will both understand and feel God's supreme love. There they will comprehend and feel the duty, the very need of sacrificing themselves in loving obedience.

Closely connected with our preaching on the Sacred Heart will come the duty of recalling to the minds of the people the great precept of fraternal charity. In the Blessed Sacrament Jesus embraces all men in His love; His Heart burns for all; this in itself is sufficient warrant to include fraternal charity in our Eucharistic teaching. Clearer still speaks the symbolism of the sacred species and the sacred banquet, evident figures of fraternal union. Add to this that the Blessed Sacrament was instituted to nourish within us that life of grace, which is the

fountain-head of spiritual consanguinity, and the principle or motive of divine charity between souls; and lastly, that in the Sacrament of the altar, as on the Cross, Christ gives us a sublime example of the greatest love of all, love unto death: "Greater love than this no man hath that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John XV, 13). The Fathers have ever viewed the Blessed Eucharist as the sacrament of fraternal love: *O Sacramentum pietatis, O signum unitatis, O vinculum caritatis,* exclaimed St. Augustine in burning words speaking of the Eucharist (In Joan., Tr. XXVI, n. 13). It is only fitting, then, that our preaching should show and explain *this symbolism, this principle or motive, this efficacious example* of fraternal charity which Jesus wished to incorporate in the sacrament of His love.

The symbolism of unity we find already expressed in the bread and wine made of many grains and grapes ground together or crushed, and blended into one complete mass. The Fathers have much insisted on this comparison, a comparison found, moreover, in the liturgy of the Church; for, in the secret prayer of the Mass of the Blessed Sacrament, we have the beautiful words: *Ecclesiæ tuæ, quæsumus, Domine, unitatis et pacis propitius dona concede: quæ sub oblatis muneribus mystice designantur.*

More expressive is the symbolism of the repast taken in common. Some among the learned do not think that the beautiful name *Agape* (love) was ever given to the Eucharistic feast as is so generally asserted, but to another kind of sacred meal which the first Christians were in the custom of taking to-

gether.[1] The particular question concerning a name, however, matters little here. Even though it were not marked out by any special name, the idea of union and fraternity stands clearly forth from the single fact of the *Synaxis,* or communion at the same table. Strikingly does St. Paul bring this before the Corinthians: "For we," he says, "being many, are one bread, one body, all that partake of one bread" (I Cor. X, 17). To sit down at the same table was of old, and is to a certain extent to-day, a sign of friendship or relationship. To partake of the same bread, to drink from the same cup is, as it were, a blending, a communion of lives. Also, we find that enterprises entered into in common, treaties of peace, marriages and the like, are inaugurated by a banquet, or, at least, pledged in some fraternal cup. We should look not only at the material and more or less animal side of this feasting; we should cast a glance, also, at the other and more noble side, the building up and the progress of life. Let us not forget, moreover, that the Scriptures themselves represent heaven as a banquet, an enjoyment in common of eternal happiness. Thus we come to understand better how expressively the Eucharistic repast foreshadows the feast of a common life in God through Christ.[2]

But Communion is more than a symbol representing a bond of fraternity in God: it creates this bond, or, at least, makes it stronger. It is a principle, a

[1] Cf. Batiffol, *Etudes d'hist. et de théol. positive,* Paris, 1907, pp. 283-323. Cf. Dom Leclercq in *Cath. Encyc.,* word "Agape."
[2] Cf. Bossuet, *Méditations sur l'Evangile,* Cène, 1e p., 52e jour.

force making for religious unity and fraternal charity. Under the Old Law, the seal which denoted admission to membership among the people of God was, indeed, Circumcision; but the vital bond which maintained social union was sacrifice. Furthermore, the Covenant consecrated by the blood from the altar was rendered more firm by communion: partaking as they did of the same victims, the Israelites felt themselves become more and more children of one Father, brothers in Yaveh, united by a kind of relationship or divine consanguinity. All this was figurative: it presaged the fraternal Communion of the New Testament when souls would be united in the same divine life of grace and glory. True, this life is born of baptism; but its nourishment and development must come from the Eucharist, the sacrament of charity and union with God. Now, charity toward God must of a necessity include love of our brethren, who are equally with us children of God: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart . . . this is the greatest and the first commandment; and the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Math. XXII, 37-39). The very motive of charity is the divine gift of grace, which creates a supernatural consanguinity among souls; and this whether these souls are considered as already possessing that charity, or as destined to possess it according to the divine plan which excludes nobody from salvation. Holy Communion, the great fountain of grace and life, strengthens the bond of blood which unites us to all our brethren in a Catholic and an Eternal Covenant.

It may be added here that in the Blessed Eucharist we find the memorial and the example of the greatest and most sublime acts of love. Well does our Savior choose the time to impose upon us a new law of love: "A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you" (John XIII, 34). He gives us this law just after He had instituted the banquet of love, on the very eve of the day on which He would give up His life for us. He Himself connects with this command His own supreme self-sacrifice: "This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John XV, 12, 13). And His last prayer is that this union of charity may exist among His followers: "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us" (John XVII, 21). What holy anxiety concerning the virtue of fraternal charity do we not see in these words! With what insistence the Savior prays and commands that this virtue should have a foremost place in our lives! He could well command, indeed, for He had already set such a striking example. On the Cross and in the Eucharist the world may henceforth contemplate the living Archetype of absolute sacrifice. There Christian charity may find its strongest incentive as well as its highest ideal. When we communicate with the Cross through the Eucharist, we drink from the fountains of infinite goodness, we come in contact with tender mercy itself, with the overflowing source of pardon and forgiveness. Though the life of fra-

ternal charity is one of perpetual sacrifice; though, for this virtue's sake, we must give up at every moment things most dear to us, our tastes, our humors, our interests, our self-love: through the virtue flowing from the Host, the sacrifice becomes, little by little, easy and sweet. Communions well made will in time engender in us the desire to sacrifice ourselves, body and soul, for our brethren. The great wonder-workers of charity knew no better place to set their hearts on fire with this most divine virtue than the ever glowing furnace of love in the Tabernacle.[1]

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In our Eucharistic preaching let us exhibit Jesus as He really exists on our altars, perfect in religion and humility.

These two virtues we place together, for they rest on the same foundation—our nothingness before God. In our present state there is added also another motive of humility—personal sin; but humility in itself rests at bottom on the fact that being creatures, our entire being, all that we possess of good, comes from the Creator: "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" (I Cor. IV, 7). When we place our nothingness side by side with the infinite and all-embracing possessions of God, when we compare our being, limited, borrowed, and decaying, with the infinite Being, self-subsisting and eternal, we cannot help but feel that it is only just that we should be effaced, hidden, even annihilated in the depths of

[1] Cf. Bossuet, *Méditations sur l'Evangile,* Cène, 2e p., 11e jour. Cf. Hedley, o. c., pp. 118-120.

humility; we feel that it is only right that we should be entirely consumed in the fire of adoration and homage. The words of the Psalmist, "My substance is as nothing before thee" (Ps. XXXVIII, 6), voice the cry of true humility and adoration. The more our humility increases, causing us to see more clearly day by day the immeasurable distance which separates our nothingness from the Infinite, the higher will our religion be raised, the more will it become pure and tend to penetrate our whole life.

On earth Jesus was perfect in His adoration and humility. Having become responsible for the sins of the human race, He desired, as His ignominious death on the Cross bears witness, to descend to the very depths of humiliation in order thereby to rise to the heights of supreme adoration. But here we wish to speak only of His interior humility such as it still exists in heaven and on our altars. Richly, indeed, and even supremely, endowed was the human nature of Jesus. Personally united to the Word, it possessed all the gifts of highest grace; and yet, in itself it ever remained a borrowed being founded on nothingness. The searching light from the intuitive vision falling on the created nature, rendered only more intense, more actual this impression of something sprung from nothing. Into this void, lovingly and gladly, from the first moment of the Incarnation, plunged the divine soul of Jesus. And this extreme humility became at that very moment what it ever afterward expressed, perpetual adoration. In heaven in the midst of eternal ecstasy, far above the saints who are drawn to God

by the light of glory and absorbed in Him, Jesus continues the homage of His humility and adoration.

On the altar He lives as He does in heaven. Day and night, year after year, He is there before God in a state of religious annihilation. That we may the better realize this state and that we may the more closely associate ourselves with Him, He appears to us under the symbols of immolation. For us and with us He renews the sacrifice of the Cross; He desires that through our spirit of humility and adoration we should form with Him on the altar one complete Host, the perfect Christian victim, made from the members united to the Head, and all sacrificed to the glory of the infinite God. All this the Christian people are capable of understanding, provided we but add our word of enlightenment and explanation; and surely, this will be no great burden to undertake, especially in the interest of those who have the good fortune to hear Mass daily.[1]

To those privileged souls also must we teach the science of union with Jesus, "the Perfect Religious of the Father." Even among those who live in the world, many daily assist at Mass and visit the Blessed Sacrament; in religious communities the daily hearing of Mass is a part of the rule and visits to Jesus are many; to this is added in not a few cases, meditation, vocal prayers, and even the recitation of the office before the Blessed Sacrament. What help for these souls against the routine that kills and the monotony that wearies, what an increase of fervor

[1] Cf. *Formation à l'humilité*, 1915, 50th thousand, pp. 157-165; 349-354, etc. Cf. Albert von Ruville, *Humility—the True Talisman*, New York, 1912.

would come to them, did they know how to unite themselves with Jesus ever praying in the Host! And we priests also, do we not sadly need a renewal of faith in the perpetual prayer of Jesus? Having finished our Mass, should we then turn away from Jesus during the rest of the long day, leaving Him alone to adore the Father? Would not our Breviary be more full of meaning and grace for us, be more attractive, if we should recite it at least from time to time before the Tabernacle?

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In our Eucharistic preaching we must endeavor above all to place clearly before the faithful the fact that on our altars we have the living memorial of the death of the Lord; and this in order to inspire them with the spirit of immolation by which they will become in their daily lives victims with Christ.

The spirit of sacrifice is the great lesson taught by the Host. The Eucharist reproduces the Cross. And this is not a pretended reproduction, the result of a too vivid imagination to be interpreted according to pious moods: it is the very object of the institution made by Christ. In the Holy Eucharist, Our Lord clearly wished to renew the sacrifice offered by His death: "This is my body, which is given for you. . . . This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you" (Luke XXII, 19, 20). In Communion, what He desires of us is this: to *announce* His death, to remember it practically by entering into its spirit: "For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you

shall shew the death of the Lord until he come" (I Cor. XI, 26). The immediate and necessary effect of Communion is to unite us with Jesus as He is on the altar, with His Body and Blood mystically separated: "The chalice of benediction which we bless is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread, which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?" (I Cor. X, 16).

The perfect communicant, then, is he who sees on the altar Jesus crucified, and desires to become a victim with Him. He who receives without this spirit of sacrifice, though he be in the state of grace and though he experience certain sentiments of piety, communicates, so to speak, only by half. He does not understand the Host; and this may be laid, perhaps, at the door of preaching which insists on secondary and metaphorical virtues at the expense of the one thing which is essential, the Cross, which is ever present and continually active on the altar.

A French journalist, E. Drumont, well known for his fearless custom of plain speaking, complained once that the Catholic education and preaching of our times had given to the Church too many communicants and not enough men. But the trouble is not with the too great number of true communicants. The Church has not too many of these; in fact, she has not even enough; and for this reason she has not enough men of conviction ready to fight when the hour of battle strikes. The Church has, indeed, too many half-communicants who receive the Host without understanding that they must absorb its virtue and thus be ready to sacrifice their lives in the ful-

filment of their Christian duties and in devotion to the great cause of God. Give the Church true communicants, and then it will have men.

Who can ever measure the amount of supernatural energy which lies dormant in the Church of God, and is, so to speak, lost because Christians do not know how to communicate? In the physical world, according to those who still admit the law of conservation of energy, nothing is lost: conversions and transformations there are; things continually change; but of energy there is no loss. Would that such a law existed in the supernatural order! What an amount of energy for action and sacrifice in the Host! But for want of an enlightened faith and a true spirit of prayer in thanksgiving, too many communicants fail to utilize that energy. During the precious moments when the Host rests on the altar of their heart, they know not how to absorb its powers of sacrifice and store them up for the needs of their every-day life. And yet this is a part of the divine plan: the virtue of the Host should pass to us; it should be actuated and converted into a movement of supernatural life, so that from all our daily actions may come forth the perfume of sacrifice, to ascend, like sweet incense, to the throne of the Most High. But the faithful committed to our care have forgotten this or have perhaps never heard of it. It is our duty to remind them of the all-powerful energy hidden in the Eucharist; it is our duty to show them how to make a practical, personal thanksgiving by speaking to Jesus of themselves and of their wants and misery, by foreseeing

the new day with its sorrows and labors and trials, and offering it up with Jesus as one and the selfsame victim, "A living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God" (Rom. XII, 1).

Nothing is so touching as the *Catechesis* in which St. Cyril of Jerusalem, with pious simplicity, recalls to the faithful of the fourth century the ceremonial of Communion: "When you approach, do not hold both hands open with the fingers spread; place the left hand beneath the right, and receive as on a throne the Body of Christ, saying *Amen.* Then having with great care sanctified your eyes by touching them with the sacred Body, eat it, being careful that not a particle should fall. . . . After this, approach to drink of the chalice; do not extend the hands, but, bowed down in sign of adoration, having said *Amen,* partake of the Blood of the Lord. And having touched your still moist lips with your fingers, anoint your eyes, your forehead, and your other senses with the divine Blood." Traces of this religious familiarity with the Eucharist are found up to the eighth century in several of the Oriental Fathers. Perhaps the young virgin Agnes alluded to it when she sang: *Amo Christum . . . cujus mater virgo est; jam corpus ejus corpori meo sociatum est et sanguis ejus ornavit genas meas.*[1]

This ancient practice passed away as years rolled on, but the idea that inspired it ought still to survive and inspire our thanksgiving. Following in the steps of the holy catechist of Jerusalem, we should

[1] St. Cyril of Jer., *Catechesis Mystag.,* V, n. 23. Cf. *Officium St. Agnetis.* Cf. Hurter, *De Eucharistia,* n. 411, note 2.

still teach the faithful how to sanctify themselves by contact with the Host. They must apply the Body and Blood of Christ to their souls and faculties, to their thoughts and affections, to the scars left by sin, to all that is feeble in their hearts, to the suffering and toil of each day. Through this contact, if it be real, their lives will be penetrated with the spirit of sacrifice; they will reach by degrees the ideal of a truly Christian life—a life immolated with Jesus in order to be one day glorified with Him.

We must not be deterred by the idle reproach preferred by some that we insist too much on the bloody side of Christianity, that we are ever speaking of the Savior's Passion, that we exhibit the life and death of a Christian as an expiatory immolation. How can we do otherwise? As ministers of the Gospel, have we the right to preach anything but Jesus and Him crucified? Is other knowledge than this needed in the spiritual life of the faithful? If the Cross to-day is a scandal to the worldling and the sensualist, if it is only folly to the superficially brilliant and the proud, that is certainly no reason why the capital dogma of faith and salvation should be toned down or veiled to bring it into accord with an erring view. We must preach this dogma and in its entirety: the Cross prolonged in the Eucharist and touching the confines of heaven; the Cross, the portion of the baptized, of the believer, of the communicant, who must needs be sacrificed upon it, but only that he may live eternally; the Cross the loadstone of the ages, to-day more than ever sweetly drawing to itself privileged souls, the noblest, the purest, the best, who

become enamored of suffering in order to continue and complete the Passion of Jesus. Who can adequately tell the beauty, the fecundity of the Cross, dominating as it does the Christian world? Who can relate the grace and fruitfulness of those select souls who, imbibing from the Host the victimal spirit, the thirst of martyrdom, become, when immolated with Jesus, the aroma and salvation of this poor world? [1]

May we be, O Jesus, among the number of these victimal souls. Grant that we may increase that number by our teaching and guidance. May all priestly and religious souls gravitate toward the Cross, the Cross on which You hang sweet God of love and life.

[1] Cf. Buathier, *Le Sacrifice,* 2e p., "Le Sacrifice dans la vie chrétienne." Cf. chiefly Lepin, S. S., *L'idée du Sacrifice dans la Religion Chrétienne,* appendice, pp. 338-438; in these pages we follow the glorious pageant of the most loving victimal souls, from the time of the martyrs to our days.

CHAPTER VII.

Et Nos Credidimus.

Some practical conclusions for the priest on Eucharistic faith, the principle of our vocation and perseverance: Attracted to the altar by faith in Jesus, our Victim, we should ever keep burning within us an ardent faith in the Victim to whom we daily communicate: this is necessary if we wish to live until death as true priests—men consecrated in chastity—men living for God and for Him alone—men who are saviors of souls.

In the discourse which followed the multiplication of the loaves as recounted by St. John in the sixth chapter of his Gospel, our Savior first proposes Himself as the Bread of Life on whom it is necessary to live through faith. Step by step He brings out more clearly the object of that living faith; He is the Bread of Life for all who believe that He has come down from heaven as the Incarnate Son of the eternal Father (29-51); He is the Bread of Life for all who believe that He has come to die in sacrifice for the salvation of the world (52); He is the Bread of Life for all who, believing His Flesh to be food and His Blood drink, partake of these at the Eucharistic table (53-58). To eat the Host and drink the Chalice is, then, the supreme exercise of vital faith. And to-day, as well as in the Savior's time, this re-

mains true, especially for the priest. Faith in the Blessed Sacrament is the very soul of the priest's life; on it both his vocation and his perseverance depend.

I.

From the very beginning of the above-mentioned discourse, the bystanders, astonished at certain dogmatic affirmations and hurt by some pertinent moral observations that came from the lips of Jesus, ask questions, discuss the answers, and not without bitterness. But when the Savior, going further, speaks of His Flesh as a real food to be given for the life of the world, murmurs and protestations burst forth: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (John VI, 53); "This saying is hard, and who can bear it?" (61). We are pained whenever we see Jesus exposed to contradiction. But the present instance is the saddest of all, for it is occasioned by the very excess of His love; and moreover, many of the disciples are among those who speak against Him: "Many therefore of his disciples, hearing it, said: this saying is hard and who can bear it?" They were disciples, and probably destined to be among the first priests of Christ; but like the common crowd, groveling in nature, and narrow of heart, they were astonished at His words. Like the crowd they never thought of spiritual food; they hungered only for material bread. The words of Our Lord: "You seek me . . . because you did eat of the loaves and were filled" (26), were well applied to them. It requires an effort of faith to broaden the heart, to elevate the soul, to make it great and noble

and to fill it with heavenly desires; after this only can the soul be worthy of the new sacrifice and the daily banquet at the table of God. "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting. . . . This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he hath sent" (27, 29). They are asked to strive for the eternal bread, but they are utterly incapable of any effort toward higher things. They think only of the bread of this earth; they refuse to believe in Christ as the Bread of Life which came down from heaven; and they go away forever: "After this many of his disciples went back; and walked no more with him" (67). Thus was the vocation of the first disciples tried by the touchstone of faith in Jesus, especially faith in Him living in the Eucharist. Many failed in this test of faith and have no longer any part with the Master. To-day the same holds true; assuredly that young man is not called to the sanctuary who does not believe in the heavenly Bread with a living and loving faith, a faith which sustains him in his strivings toward virtue, and awakes within him holy desires and noble aspirations.

Perseverance in our priestly calling seems also to depend on our faith in Jesus. A lost vocation is, indeed, a great misfortune; but surely, it is not the greatest of all. Far better to go away like the unbelieving disciples of old than to remain so near Jesus without sufficient faith. Long ago, when Jesus first spoke of the Eucharist, one lacking in real faith stood close to His side. And when St. John tells us

how Christ reproached the disciples with harboring unbelievers among them, he adds by way of explanation: "For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that did not believe, and who he was that would betray him" (65). Is this only the personal interpretation of the Beloved disciple in whom the thought of incredulity has naturally awakened the corresponding idea of betrayal? It seems not; for, soon after, Jesus Himself clearly alludes to the one who must betray Him. To the splendid profession of faith pronounced by Peter in the name of all, Christ answers: "Have not I chosen you twelve; and one of you is a devil? Now he meant Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon: for this same was about to betray him" (71, 72). Why such clear allusions to a crime as yet so far away and so entirely inconceivable? Was it in order to show us now while He insisted so much on faith the possible connection between priestly disloyalty and unbelief, to point out that the defection of the priest has its beginning in a lack or lessening of faith in Christ, as the Light and the Bread of Life? God alone knows. He alone can unravel the mysterious and tangled chain of causes which bring about the fall of the Angels of the sanctuary. But, at the same time, the insinuations of St. John and of Jesus Himself would lead us to think that the first link in the chain of perdition for a priest is forged by infidelity to the word of Christ and the Host of the altar. A young man prepares for the priesthood. From the very start he knows that his faith is very weak; and in spite of this, he remains among the aspirants to the sanctuary like

Judas among the twelve. Once a priest, his religious exercises, such as meditation and the like, if not thrown altogether to the winds, are sadly neglected, and as a consequence, he lives not in the spirit of Christ, but in the spirit of the world. He offers the Holy Sacrifice, if at all, in a hurried, perfunctory manner, for his heart, his soul, is not there. Bad tendencies, hitherto unsuspected or kept in restraint by the seminary rules and the absence of occasions, now awake to vigorous life. Against these he has no protection, for the light of faith is dim, and the virtue emanating from the Host remains inactive in his heart. There is nothing to counteract the lukewarmness and naturalism which begin to enshroud him and bid fair to extinguish his poor priestly life. He is soon on the verge of mortal sin. He needs but the occasion and he is lost. Is it not probable that, like Judas of old, he will seek this opportunity to betray his Master? And soon, very soon perhaps, he will hear within himself the bitter words spoken long ago, like the avowal of a priest accusing himself of a sacrilegious Mass: "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood."

It is too sad to contemplate such an end to a priestly life. But while we draw the veil over it, we must not forget that even though we do not sink into the abyss, though we do not betray our Master, we may still be far from the ideal of the priesthood. The priest or the seminarist who, in the words of St. Paul, does not sufficiently "discern the body of the Lord," and who is not sufficiently strong in faith to live his very life through Jesus in the Host, con-

signs Himself to a sterile and cheerless existence. Deprived through his own fault of the graces flowing from the altar and of the true joys contained in the chalice of Christ, his life will be empty, his heart dark and cold.

Those half-unbelievers who desert or profane the altar were foreseen by Jesus through His supernatural science. He saw them in the many disciples, who, doubting His words concerning the Bread of Life, "went back; and walked no more with him" (67). Have we ever pictured to ourselves the emotions of the Savior when brought face to face with this sad defection? When He saw the crowd, a short time before, famishing with hunger, a cry of pity escaped Him: "I have compassion on the multitudes because they . . . have not what to eat" (Math. XV, 32). If the sight of the people deprived of material bread moved Him so intensely, what must He not have felt to see not only His disciples leave His side now, but, down through the ages, the never-ending stream of those whose incredulity would lead them to forsake the Bread of Life: and worst of all, to see among them His elect, His priests, starving in the midst of plenty, famishing while they hold the Bread of Life in their hands, or turning this Bread into the poison of death! With His eyes veiled in tears, tears for the sad future as well as for the present, long must He have looked after those who went away. At last He withdrew His gaze and, turning to the twelve, sadly said: "Will you also go away?" (68). In the almost general defection did He doubt these also? No! for He read their

very minds and saw their faith. But His heart, oppressed with sorrow, wished to have some consolation offered to Him, and with those words He called it into being. Peter understood the Master, and his comforting answer burst forth full of faith and love: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (69). It was the cry of a true priest attracted to Jesus and indissolubly united with Him through faith in the Bread of Life.

II.

"Will you also go away?" Shall we believe or go away? This alternative comes up before every priest; he must either preserve unto death a living and loving faith in the Host of the altar, or else go away; that is, lead a semblance of a priestly life without virtue, without fruit, and, perhaps, in sin.

We say advisedly, "he must preserve unto death a living and loving faith"; for not only during transitory outbursts of devotion, not only during more or less frequent periods of fervor, but during our entire life, even in the midst of sorrow and darkness, this living and loving faith must be kept up. Who is the priest who at one time or another, in a moment of enthusiasm, has not cried with Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." After a youth sustained and illumined by that light which ever shone brightly—the hope of ascending the altar some day—at last comes the realization: minor orders, subdeaconship, deaconship, like golden steps, bring us nearer and nearer to the glorious goal; and then the grandeur, the

wonder of our priesthood, the sweetness of our first Mass; then, oh! then, we believe that Jesus, the Son of God, our Savior, our friend, our brother, is there real and living in the Host; we know it and we feel it: "And we have believed and have known, that thou art the Christ, the Son of God." At that period of our lives, nothing was too great to ask of us: it was sweet to be vowed to the immolation of chastity, to have sacrificed all for God, for Him alone and for souls. All was brightness and exaltation* * * * But darkness and depression will and must come. The sacrifice we made is not for a space only; it must be renewed daily and hourly during our entire life. Not only during the first and fervent days of our priesthood, but forever even unto death; even when sensible devotion has grown cold; even when temptation, long ago routed, marshals its forces again, and, stronger than ever, coming in a new and more seductive guise, assails us in moments of depression; even when passions and selfishness, overcome forever as we fondly thought, revolt anew and show themselves more unruly than before: forever unto death we must live—consecrated in chastity—men of God, entirely given to Him and to Him only—saviors of souls. To live thus is possible only for the priest who preserves His faith in the living Host.

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If we wish to live sanctified lives consecrated to chastity, we must preserve an ardent faith in our daily Host.

As we have already shown, there was imposed on

the priesthood of ancient times a law of relative continence. Everywhere a priest was sought that would be holy before God; everywhere virginity was looked upon as the ideal of sanctity. Jesus alone realized this ideal: He is the High Priest who is innocent and without stain, separated from sinners, purer than the heavens; and by the solemn declarations in favor of virginity which we find in the Gospels, by the intimate action of His grace, by the sanction of the Holy Church He invites to voluntary celibacy His vicar-priests, the ministers of His Eucharist. One motive of this law may be found in the necessity for the priest of being in a position to devote himself entirely to the care of souls; but its ultimate reason must be sought at a higher source. In the entire field of Christian Tradition the obligation of chastity is based on the Eucharistic altar. The mystical immolation of which the priest is the minister imposes the duty of self-immolation. Listen to the glowing words of Bossuet: "Purify yourselves, O sacred ministers, who give us this virginal Body . . . may your hand which bestows it upon us, be more pure than the light; your lips which consecrate it more chaste than the lips of an innocent virgin. O, what a mystery is here! What purity is required in the celebrant! Marriage is holy and honorable, and the nuptial bed is undefiled (Heb. XIII, 4); but it is not pure enough for those who must consecrate the Flesh of the Lamb. Through this holy institution of continence, which the Church has had in view, as the learned know, ever since Apostolic times, which she established whenever she could,

beginning with the first centuries, particularly in the Western Churches and more especially in Rome . . . the Church wished to prepare for this virginal Body, formed from a virgin, ministers worthy of it, and to give us a living idea of the purity of this mystery." [1]

The Host, which imposes chastity, makes chastity possible. For the immaculate Host we vowed to remain pure; and it is by the help of this same Host that we can keep our vow.

The Levitic ritual prescribed special victims for the consecration of a priest. Aaron and his children were anointed and sprinkled with the blood of the ram of consecration; and afterward they ate in communion a part of his flesh (Exod. XXIX, 19-32; Lev. VIII, 22-36). In the Eucharist, Jesus gives Himself as the daily victim of His priests; His Blood washes away the stains of past sin and His Flesh gives nourishment for holiness of life. Already had He said to His Apostles, and through them to all His priests: "This is my body which is given *for you;* This is the chalice . . . in my blood which shall be shed *for you*" (Luke XXII, 19, 20). But He wished to announce more clearly still that He would be sacrificed on the Cross, and ever afterward in the Eucharist, especially as the victim of sanctification for His priests. Consequently, He speaks very plainly in the sacerdotal prayer which terminates the discourse after the Last Supper. There, addressing the Father in behalf of His Apostles and all future priests, our Savior says: "I pray for them . . . for them whom thou hast given me. . . . Sanctify

[1] Bossuet, *Méditations sur l'Evangile,* Cène, 1e p., 24e jour.

them in truth. . . . As thou hast sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for them do I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth . . ." (John XVII, 9, 17-19).

In this prayer, which is, as Bossuet says, "the canon or the soul of His sacrifice . . . declaring to whom, for whom, and for what end He offers . . ." [1], Jesus has in view especially, and mentions in a particular manner, His Apostles and priests. All Christians without doubt have part in the sacrifice of Christ; but here the Savior does not consider the faithful except in the last place, in a kind of secondary plan: it was only through the thought of His priests that He is led to mention all who would be converted and would believe by their ministry: "And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in me" (John XVII, 20). So when Jesus prayed at this time His intention goes *first of all* to His Apostles, to His priests, *to His clerics*, to the elect whom the Father has especially *given* Him as His own, *to those whom He sends, as He Himself was sent*, on a mission of salvation: *Pro his quos dedisti mihi. . . . Sicut tu me misisti et ego misi eos.* For these He says: "I sanctify myself that they also may be sanctified in truth." The Greek word "ἁγιάζω," "I sanctify," means sometimes the offering of a victim which is sacrificed, made holy or consecrated in God's honor; sometimes, also, it is taken to signify the purification and sanctification (union or consecration to God) caused by the offering in those who offer the sacrifice

[1] *Méditations sur l'Evangile,* Cène, 2e p., 34e jour.

or participate in it. In this last meaning it is applied to the Apostles; but when the Savior applies it to Himself, He does so in the first sense, and by it expresses His voluntary immolation. Critics to-day commonly interpret the text as if it read: "I offer myself in sacrifice that by the virtue of this sacrifice they may be sanctified and consecrated in truth." [1]

Twice does Our Lord repeat this expression: "Sanctify them in truth"—"Sanctified in truth" (17 and 19). In the style of St. John these words mean "Sanctified through faith and grace." Here, in fact, St. John identifies truth with the revealed light which is the Word of God, "thy word is truth" (17). But in the Prologue the Apostle had already identified vital faith, grace, and truth with one another: "He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in his name. Who are born . . . of God. . . . And we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father full of grace and truth. . . . And of his fullness we all have received" (John I, 12-16).

Jesus is, therefore, immolated so that His priests may be confirmed and consecrated in faith and in grace, in a special faith and grace such as would befit His envoys, His representatives, who are truly other Christs. He is immolated in order that His apostles, participating through their ministry in the glory of His priesthood, and yet not possessing of themselves the holiness they need in their character as envoys and ministers of Jesus Christ, may find this holiness

[1] Cf. Calmes, *L'Evangile selon St. Jean,* pp. 415, 416. Cf. Loisy, *Le Quatrième Evangile,* on this passage.

in Him. It is, therefore, because of our calling, and because a special sanctity is necessary for us, that more directly, and, so to speak, officially, Jesus offers and immolates Himself for us. To aid us to meet the duties of our state, to make it possible for us to possess the virtues attached to our vocation, and especially the great virtue of sacerdotal chastity, Jesus laid by a special and all-powerful help in our daily Host. The entire text of the sacerdotal prayer of Jesus clearly gives us to understand that He would not have wished, nor could He have been able, to send us as other Christs, He could not have confided to us the superhuman mission of saving souls, He could not have left us in the midst of the dangers of a corrupt and corrupting world, bound as we are to lead an angelic life, unless He could at the same time assure us of a daily source of faith and grace, of light and purity; and this He has given us in the Victim of the Cross. "And now, I am not in the world, and these are in the world. . . . While I was with them I kept them in thy name. . . . And now I come to thee . . . I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from evil. . . . Sanctify them in truth. . . . As thou hast sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for them do I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth" (John XVII, 11-19).

With all these divine aids which come from the Cross it is possible to realize the ideal of priestly holiness. Chaste and holy we must be and we can be. To remain holy and chaste, strife is necessary, heroic

strife at times; vigilance more wearisome and wearing than strife is necessary; necessary in youth, necessary in old age, necessary when we are already descending to the grave. Vowed though we are to sublime virtue, raised up to God's own altar, we ever remain men of misery, who cannot but be humiliated and covered with confusion when we feel within us every base concupiscence. This is why it is always necessary to fight and to be on guard. And to strive and to watch are made possible for us because we have the Eucharist—our daily prayer on the altar, our daily Communion with Christ; Jesus our Savior sacrificed for us and now become for us the "corn of the elect and the wine bearing virgins," the food of immolation and of purity.

"I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth." Would that we could keep these words in mind and were able to comprehend them through faith! They would teach us the holiness of the priesthood, which required so great a Victim to realize that holiness in us. They would speak to us of the Savior's special love, of His tender solicitude for His priests. They would bring home to us the strength we possess for the preservation of purity and for growth in holiness. May Jesus grant to all His priests the gift to understand and to live up to these words!

* * *

If we wish to be men of God belonging entirely to Him and to Him only, we must preserve an ardent faith in our daily Host.

No longer does the priest belong to anybody but to God: *Ut sint mei religione perpetua; constituitur in iis quæ sunt ad Deum; Dominus pars hæreditatis meæ.* Not only at the moment when he serves at the altar in the offering of sacrifice does he belong to God, but at all times and in all things. Body and soul, he is the property of God. But to his Lord in a particular manner should be dedicated the priest's intelligence and heart. Can that man be a finished, a perfect priest, whose spirit is not ever enlightened with light from on high, and whose heart wanders back again in search of earthly affections? What a setback, to say the least, he receives, what a lowering of his dignity, if within him supernatural light is obscured, if his affections fall again to a natural plane! His vocation in calling him away from the world has placed him above it in a state of sublime isolation. For the Lord he has renounced family joys and temporal ambitions; he has even given up the pursuit of merely human science, devoting himself in a special manner to those studies that serve the purpose of zeal and lead to God. This isolation in the region of the supernatural, so necessary for the intellect which desires to remain pure and consecrated to God, *Deo sacrum*, as also for the heart anxious to retain its purity, this grandeur of separation may at times terrify poor human nature; but it all becomes possible, even easy and sweet, in the light of faith that comes from the Eucharist and in the strength of grace that flows from daily Communion.

The Levitic priests had received no share in the

distribution of the land of Israel; they lived on the tithes paid by the people, and especially on the offerings made to the altar: "He prepared them bread in the first place unto fulness: for the sacrifices also of the Lord they shall eat" (Eccles. XLV, 26). These words are, indeed, very apt when applied to the priests of the New Law, whose share of the inheritance is, in very truth, God Himself. He Himself provides for their spiritual subsistence. Bread for the intellect and the heart, the bread which satisfies the soul, He has prepared for them in the Victim of their sacrifice.

Deo Sacrum. Sacred to God must be our intelligence, fed on His pure light, living wholly in Him. And if we have faith, can we not see, focused and radiant in the real presence and mystic immolation of our Redeemer, as in a living center, all the rays of divine light which are diffused through the various dogmas of Christian revelation? He cannot regret the wonders revealed and the enjoyment procured by profane studies, he has not to fear the temptations of doubt or the infiltrations of the ambient pantheistic naturalism, this priest, who, with faith, has once discovered on the Eucharistic altar the mystery of light and the abyss of divine wonders. An entire life of study and contemplation will be too short; all his powers of mind, all the illuminations brought by faith, will not suffice to make a priest able to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth of the Eucharistic dogma. In the Host he sees the Cross; he sees all the ancient altars leading up to the Cross; he beholds the re-

ligion of heaven presided over by the same Jesus and consummating the sacrifice of the Cross; he sees the Victim, offered for salvation, now incorporating him with His death, and the Bread of Life eternal deifying him for heaven.

This dogma alone, if taken in its entirety, would suffice to gain our assent to the fact of revelation. For no mere human being could conceive and formulate a synthesis of religion so wide, so high, at once so divine and so human; much less could he adapt it so harmoniously to the entire history of religion and to all that is noblest in the aspirations of humanity. This dogma alone would suffice to furnish spiritual nourishment to an entire life of prayer and meditation: if we had more faith, every meditation, every Communion, would disclose to us a new aspect more elevated and more ravishing in the mystery of mysteries.

Deo Sacrum. The heart must be sacred to God and love others only in Him. The object and the aliment of our love is on the altar. For a priest with ardent faith what greater joy can there be than daily Communion with his loving Master. Laboring in an unchristian parish a priest wrote: "I am weary because I am alone and have no one to love." Alone in a natural sense indeed he was, for this must be. But alone in a supernatural sense he was not and could not be. This he could never say. For Jesus is ever in the Tabernacle the priest's brother and friend: "As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you. Abide in my love;" "I will not now call you servants. . . . But I have called you friends" (John

XV, 9-15). These declarations of friendship and invitations of love we cannot but understand in a proper and literal meaning when we see them exemplified and realized by daily Communion. We have, indeed, Some One to love, Some One who claims the possession of our whole heart, separating, isolating it jealously, at the same time that He expands and inflames it to make it capable of loving men tenderly and purely.

*
* *

Lastly, if the priest wishes to live true to his calling as savior of souls, he must ever preserve intact an ardent faith in the Host of the altar.

"As thou hast sent me into the world, I also have sent them" (John XVII, 18). Jesus came to save the world, and He sends His priests to continue His mission. The daily Host which the priest receives, and which makes him holy, will also make him capable of sanctifying others. He should daily communicate with the sufferings of Christ for himself and for his people. *His Communion itself is an act of his public ministry: in it he should offer and immolate himself in the name of his people; from it he must gather for his people the fruit of the Cross.*

He must immolate himself for the people. In some sacrifices of the Old Law the priest alone had the right to communicate (Num. XVIII, 8-12; Lev. VI, 28); and these sacerdotal communions, sometimes at least, had a certain public character. God set apart for the priest a portion of some sin-offerings; this they were to eat in the Holy Place, at the same time

remembering that they must bear the iniquity of the people and make atonement for them before the Lord (Lev. X, 12-20). The priest of the New Law also, when in the true Holy Place he eats the Flesh of the true Victim of sins, must remember to adore and make atonement for his people. Regularly, all who offer the Victim should be united to it in Communion. The priest who supplies the place of the people in offering sacrifice communicates also in their name. Penetrated with the spirit of the Eucharistic Victim, he should then give himself as a victim of suffering in the name of all his people and for them all.

The priest must gather the fruits of Calvary for the people. Every morning he receives the Blood which saves the world. During the long day he must distribute to the people whom either religious indifference or the necessary duties of state have kept far from the altar the benefits of this precious Blood. In the prayer and in the preaching, in the conduct and in the conversation of the priest who communicates with a living faith, there can ever be felt the influence of the Host, sweetly attractive and fruitful. It can be said of him as it was of his Master of old: "Virtue went out from him, and healed all" (Luke VI, 19); through the priest who has absorbed it in his Communion souls come in touch with the virtue of Jesus, their Savior.

This virtue of the living Host shows itself especially in an entire and purely supernatural devotion to the care of souls. According to the most commonly accepted reading of his prophetic text, Isaias

announces that the Messiah would lay down His life as a *sin-offering* for the people (Isaias LIII, 10). Centuries later, Jesus, speaking of Himself as though already on the Cross, says: "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John XV, 13). Every morning since then He again "lays down his life," sacrificing Himself for His friends, for His people. We His ministers must follow His example. "If any man minister to me, let him follow me" (John XII, 26). Preeminently we "minister" to Him in our Communion, taking, as it were, His life within us; and thus animated, we cannot but be ready to give up our own life, to sacrifice ourselves for the people. "In this we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (I John III, 16). If, each morning, we discover again through faith, and deeply feel, the charity of Christ who gave Himself for all, we shall learn to give ourselves up to sacrifice, not through vanity or the desire of gaining popular favor, not to satisfy a kind of natural need of external activity, but through pure zeal and for God alone; we shall learn to give ourselves not with coldness, and, as it were, by constraint, like one who performs a painful duty, a disagreeable task, but with all our soul, with all our supernaturalized tenderness: "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

Thus, at last, the Host which keeps us chaste, which makes us totally and solely men of God, will make us self-sacrificed apostles, saviors of souls, provided always we preserve unto death a living and loving faith in our daily Communion.

CHAPTER VIII.

Pater, in Manus Tuas.

When we receive the Viaticum, Jesus will come as Priest and Victim to consecrate our death by uniting it with His own; and through this supreme immolation He will transform our Christian and sacerdotal life into one of blissful adoration in the eternal holocaust of heaven. For this great act of our life we must prepare.

A religion which evokes the terrors of judgment is accused by some of darkening the last moments of the dying and of torturing them with visions of sanctions beyond the tomb. Were it not for these imaginary fears, man would peacefully grow old and die; seeing on all sides things that gradually change and perish and accept their lot, he also would learn to approach his end calmly, without a murmur, without hope or fear, resigned, as Taine in his latter days expressed it, to the laws of Nature, "the Beautiful Goddess, who has the appearance of neither good nor evil, and who, with her trailing robes sweeping the earth, upsets those frail constructions called human lives."

Others contend that since man has lived his life for good or for evil, if there be a just Judge beyond, every one will be judged, not by his last moments, but by the entire past which is now beyond recall.

How then can human destiny be changed by a forced death-bed repentance, or by sacred rites performed over one who is already half dead? The good laborer has finished his day—let him sleep in peace; the sluggard has already slept—abandon him to the consequences of his wasted and guilty life.

Others still would remove every disturbing image from the eyes of the soul which is about to take its flight toward the sun-kissed shores of hope. Speak not of divine judgments or of the sacrifice of earthly separation; let heaven, and heaven only, stand out clearly before the dying gaze. Smilingly, then, will the poor soul, in peace at last, set out for its *Father's home.*

Far otherwise is our concept of death, more true, more elevated, and withal exceedingly sweet.

We cannot resign ourselves to allow our career to end as it will, for we are not among the number "of those who have no hope." We believe, and we know, that there is another life after death, an eternal life whose portals are opened to us by the judgment of a just Judge. The sentence, indeed, will be pronounced on our entire life: *Liber scriptus proferetur, in quo totum continetur.* But confiding in Jesus our Savior, we know how efficacious are the divine sacraments and sincere repentance at all times to repair a misspent life. At the last moment, the guilty soul, moved by grace, can, with sudden bound, free itself from the grasp of sin to conform itself to the Cross and share in its infinite expiation and pardon. For many, then, the instant of death may decide eternity; for all it is the great moment which, placing them in

the presence of their Judge, opens before them an endless vista of weal or woe. Can we without committing a crime veil its importance in empty words?

Lastly, we who believe know that when life begins to fade, we are face to face with the hour of our supreme sacrifice. The Father is then, indeed, calling us *home;* but like Jesus Himself, who had to pass through the gates of bitter immolation to enter into glory, so we, also, must bear our share in that supreme immolation if we wish to partake of the heavenly inheritance. As members of a crucified Christ we must be crucified with Him in death.

In these thoughts it is that, in very truth, we shall find all that is beautiful in the Christian's death. This death we must contemplate; for it we must prepare.

I.

Many are the sublime and beautiful words written on the death of the Christian. But to none was it given to present us with a body of doctrine so complete and so elevated of our death in Jesus as that which we find in the pages of Bossuet. To him, then, have we gone for our inspiration, and to him are we indebted for the thoughts embodied in the following pages. These thoughts we have selected especially from his *Reflections on the Agony of Christ Jesus.*[1]

The common exposition of the terrors of death

[1] Outside of these "Reflections" and the "Sermons" on death, and on the resurrection of the dead, we may refer the reader to Bossuet's *Préparation à la mort; Courtes prières que l'on peut réciter à un malade aux approaches de la mort; Exercices pour se préparer à la mort,* etc. (Vivès, VII.)

with its convulsions and despairing agony, as set forth by some schools of preaching, is, to say the least, somewhat exaggerated. Such an ending of life is rather the exception. More common it is to see death set in almost insensibly, devoid of all shock, and often so peacefully that those who are nearby cannot tell when the spirit has fled. But, nevertheless, death has its fears for us. Beforehand we are torn with apprehension and we suffer from the instinctive horror of death. It is a horror, half fright, half repulsion, altogether different from that simple sadness which we sometimes feel over evanescent things. It comes from the fact that in the actual original order of things we were not destined to die. Death for human kind was born of sin, and in the disorder and hideousness of sin it participates. "Sin entered into this world, and by sin death"; "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. V, 12; VI, 23). Instead of being the natural passing away of life, it is a sanction, a kind of sad and ignominious punishment endured in prospect during our whole life long. Beforehand we mistrust the treachery, and we feel the heart-rending separations, of pitiless death. Beforehand we shudder as if we already heard the death rattle, the last sigh of agony, the fastening down of the coffin closed on us forever, its grating sound against the sides of the grave, the shovelful of earth falling on the box which contains our nameless remains—and then the eternal silence accentuated by the gnawing of worms whose work will soon leave nothing of us but a little dust. Beforehand, also, we feel with sadness our burial in the forgetful

hearts of our friends—a burial almost as rapid as our entombment in the grave, and far more profound.

And yet, in spite of all the instinctive horror accompanying the thought of death, the true Christian accepts, and even at times desires, death; for beyond the dissolution of his earthly life he sees Christ: "Having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ" (Philip. I, 23). For those who believe and hope, for all those who understand the mystery of Calvary, their own death is the great moment when they can be fully united to the vivifying sacrifice. For them the fears and separations, the very horrors of the tomb, only consummate their sacrifice offered in communion with the death of Christ.

Let us recall briefly the theology of St. Paul already developed in this work.[1] We live through grace won for us by the divine sin-destroying sacrifice. Our own flesh will rise again by virtue of this sacrifice which, triumphant over sin and death on the glorious resurrection morning, will conquer again on the last day in each one of Christ's members. But to rise again with Jesus we must be really incorporated to His sacrifice during our entire life and particularly in the supreme and crowning act of death. In a word, the infinite sacrifice of expiation and salvation must be extended to, and completed in, the death of Christ's mystic members before its effects in respect to life eternal can be obtained.

By the very fact that a Christian dying in the state of grace is sufficiently united with his Savior, it

[1] Rom. V, VI, VII; I Cor. XV; cf. above, 3d p., Chap. III, 4th p., Chap. V.

is true to say, even though death should come upon him unawares, that he dies in Jesus. The least degree of sanctifying grace, binding as it does the soul to Jesus, makes that soul a sharer in all that the Victim of Calvary did in its favor when He died for it.

In His own death Christ in such a manner joined us to His triumph over sin and hell that we may henceforth depart this life with perfect confidence. But He did more. Through the union and communication existing between the Head and His living members, Christ has associated us morally with His holy dispositions, and He has taken charge of all our interests, duties, and obligations before the Father. And since He foresaw how often the poor human powers of soul and body would be, at the last moment, at best but a flickering light, if not entirely extinguished, He has already satisfied in our stead the necessity in which we are placed of dying as victims of sin. Distinctly present to His affectionate heart on the Cross was our agony; and in His unbounded charity He looked upon that agony and made it inseparable from His own. Then it was that He consecrated in Himself our last hour; He sanctified our sufferings and death by His spirit of penance, of sacrifice, and of homage to the sovereignty of His Father. By an indescribable outburst of love He beforehand assigned to us His holy dispositions before God, so that henceforth they are as our very own, even when in our powerlessness to understand we are incapable of conceiving their action. Unable though we may be to have those actual dispositions

in ourselves, we can have them at least in Jesus through our union with Him as His living members.

What grandeur, what privileges of sanctity, the Christian dying in the state of grace finds in the death of Jesus! The ignominious sanction for sin is transfigured into sacrifice. A ray of beauty and of virtue falls from the Cross on each bed of agony, and lo! an altar stands in its place. How unfortunate those who at their last moment are cut off by sin from all union with Christ!

But if it is true that the sanctity of Jesus reaches out to us in life and in death, even without our actual knowledge, it is no less true that these privileges of sanctity are communicated more abundantly to those who in clearer consciousness bind themselves in a more intimate union of spirit and sentiment to the death of the Savior. It is of first importance, then, to render the union of our agony with the dying Jesus as conscious and as close as may be within our power.

When the shadow of death is upon us, let us not embarass ourselves with a thousand confused acts, selected at random according to our own imagination or the ill-placed zeal of our friends. Let us take up and embrace the crucifix. Then is the time to understand what the dying Jesus is for us, what we are to Him, what He has done on the Cross for us, what He is going to consummate in us. On our part we should have but one desire: to be united with the dispositions which possessed Him in His agony, and thus make our death in all things conformable to His.

Consummatum est: the words which may be called the seal of the New Testament. "All is consummated," Jesus cries to us; the value of ancient sacrifice is no more; henceforth My mystic death, together with the death of My mystic members, is alone worthy of the altar of the Most High. "All is consummated," will we in our turn say at the decisive moment of our lives. My body becomes enfeebled and sinks toward the tomb; the noble faculties, the exercise of which was my greatest pleasure, begin to grow heavy and to be paralyzed; my bodily and intellectual life are things of the past: this dissolution I accept through Christ for God. Dreams of zeal, beloved plans, near and dear relations—all must be given up: all is consummated. I must die to my life-work; I must die in the hearts of my friends; soon there will be left of me nothing save some dust, and, perhaps, a name and date inscribed on a stone: I accept this complete annihilation of earthly ties and activity, this death consummated in Jesus. But too feeble is the word "accept," for I love the going out of my being and life because in this I see the Cross of Christ, and on that Cross I am happy to die with Jesus in the sufferings of a Christian death, fortified by the blessed faith and hope springing from His death: for I believe that death is only gain for those who love, and that thrice blessed are those who die in Jesus. I believe that every soul in this world must labor in sorrow unto death to bring forth its own eternity. I believe that this corruptible body must needs descend into the earth like a seed and there be dissolved in order to spring forth again in-

corruptible and glorious. I believe that by my last sufferings and by my death I shall fill up what is wanting in the Passion of Christ. I believe that death will deliver me from sin and the danger of sin, perfecting me in sanctity by the supreme graces of the Cross, together with that other grace beyond the tomb, purgatory, where in suffering love so many souls have to achieve their purification to be worthy to enter the Sanctuary of infinite Holiness. I believe, oh! yes, I believe in that mystery of goodness and beauty which Christ began for me on the Cross and which He will consummate in my death: *Consummatum est.*

In this spirit do I wish to receive the Holy Viaticum.

As the priest going to the altar where the victim is prepared for immolation, will Jesus come to me at my last hour. Consecrating my body and soul, He will take possession of them as their true Master, and then with the sword of sickness and death He will sacrifice them to the Father. Intimately united with the adorable Body of Christ, I shall enter also into His designs as the great sacrificing High Priest who is about to immolate me in death.

And at the end I will breathe forth my last breath in uttering the very words by which my Savior consummated His sacrifice: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke XXIII, 46). Through Him, with Him, and in Him I will offer up my life to my Heavenly Father.

Thus will my death be truly Christian, truly sacerdotal, befitting a consecrated member of Christ.

Thus will be consummated at my last hour the sacrifice to which I have been dedicated in my baptism and my ordination and which I should have offered up in every act of my Christian and sacerdotal life.

II.

Would that we could enter so deeply into these truths that we could realize them perfectly at the moment of death. The fulfilment of this wish depends partly on ourselves. Beforehand we should meditate on those truths, and strive during our lifetime to drink of the spirit which they contain; in a word, we should ever prepare for death.

More than once, perhaps, we have preached on death; and we have brought out in striking terms Christ's insistence on the necessity of being prepared. His tender love fears lest at the last moment we may be taken unawares. "Be you then ready," "watch," and such like words were often on His lips (Matt. XXIV, 42; Mark XIII, 37; Luke XII, 40). He does not say: You must try to be ready; when you begin to feel the weight of years, or when you are dangerously sick, know then that I am coming and be prepared. No; He speaks absolutely: Be ready beforehand and keep yourself ever ready, else you will be taken off your guard. By preparation, our divine Savior meant first of all the state of grace; for this, indeed, is what is strictly required. But should we not presume that, in His loving care of us, He meant also a preparation by which we would be perfectly united with His own immolation on the Cross? Is it not otherwise sufficiently evi-

dent that our entire Christian and priestly life should be but a preparation for the great act which decides our eternity, for the final sacrifice which will crown our vocation by consummating our consecration and immolation to God?

How many Christians, how many priests even, through lack of preparation, miss the opportunity of dying the ideal death in Christ Jesus!

Absolutely true, indeed, it is, we repeat, that whoever dies in the state of grace, even without further preparation, dies well: the Savior has died for him and has already united him to the great sacrifice. But a Christian, and, still more, a priest, should aim at the ideal death—to depart from this life as a victim extended on the Cross of Jesus. Such a death cannot be prepared for on our last day, much less in the last few hurried moments of life. In the work of genius nothing has been entirely improvised; in the moral order the law is more rigorous still: heroism is never improvised; our sublime sacrifice cannot be the work of an hour.

The priest, especially, should have at heart the preparation of his priestly death. As we grow older, we may perhaps have reason to fear to face our God when we look back and see how sterile have been our lives: what priest is there who cannot find failure stamped deeply, at least in part, on his life—a life made for great things, a life destined to be so beautiful and so fruitful? But many shortcomings of the past can be repaired by our last act of sacrifice in death. Let us not, through lack of preparation, expose ourselves to the danger of making this act

also a failure. Let us not miss the supreme opportunity to be great, to be holy, to live entirely for God by dying for Him.

The preparation for a fitting priestly death is of such vast importance that in the constitutions of some religious orders the perfect dispositions for a death immolated with Jesus are carefully described and intentionally suggested beforehand, as if such a death were, not only one of the regular duties or exercises of the religious life, but even the foremost among them. An instance may be cited from the constitutions of the Society of Mary better known to us than others: *Socius in mortis articulo constitutus animo suo revolvat se victimam esse Deo mancipatam ac consecratam, sub auspiciis B. Mariæ, Matris suæ dulcissimæ, una cum Christo, qui semetipsum Deo Patri in cruce obtulit hostiam suavitatis pro omnibus. Quapropter, hoc in se sentire studeat quod et in Christo Jesu, . . . nullamque . . . amittat partem pretii in hoc ultimo sacrificio absconditi* (Const. S. M., n. 242).

Henry Perreyve in one of his meditations on Holy Orders looks upon the priest's death as his last Mass, and insists on the special preparation required: "Priests should look upon death as an office of their priesthood. It is their last Mass. . . . The body with which You were clothed, O Jesus, on the day of Your Incarnation, was for You but the matter of sacrifice. . . . This is also what their mortal body should be for all those who partake of Your priesthood. They should use it as You did, to preach the truth and to edify mankind; but its essential and

sacerdotal use should be for death. This death they should begin by chastity, continue by mortification, and consummate at last in the true death, which is their final oblation, their last sacrifice. They should then from afar be occupied about their death, to make it conform to Yours, O Jesus. . . . They should prepare for it as they would prepare to celebrate Mass, for the priest's death united to Your death, and consummated in Yours for the salvation of men, is nothing less than a sacrifice." [1]

Truly, indeed, should we think of death from afar, so that as the death of a victim it may be really precious in God's sight.

The remote preparation will consist in study of the sublime theology of the Savior's death, added to meditation on the same, and also in devotion to the agony of the Son of God. All this cannot fail to bring us to adore the sentiments of the Savior in His state of sacrifice, and to implore the grace of being ever united to Him in His holy dispositions.

The occasion of a more immediate preparation will be afforded by our monthly retreats. In the course of the meditation on our last end, we should bring before us vividly the representation of a just Judge who requires a strict account of our life; but near this let us place another picture showing Jesus nailed to a Cross and offering us a place by His side. Let us foresee and formulate in advance the loving feelings and holy dispositions which we wish to have and to express in our last offering when we shall come to receive the Holy Viaticum. Let us bring into

[1] H. Perreyve, *Méditations sur les Saints Ordres*, p. 70.

being now those desires of a more exquisite purity and more profound consecration which we would wish to feel at the moment when we are anointed for the last fight. How many graces and gifts of consecration, O my Jesus, have You not bestowed upon my soul! The waters of baptism produced my first consecration to the Holy Trinity, anointing and sealing my soul with the grace, the character, and the very name of Christ; the Holy Chrism of confirmation made me stronger for the exterior profession of Christian faith while it marked and consecrated my soul more deeply with the sign of Christ; the anointing of my hands and the consecrating words of the ordination made me another Christ; and now, at the end, comes extreme unction, which is as the last touch of Your sanctifying hand, O my Jesus, the supreme consecrating of my soul for eternity!

If we would only take more literally and personally the words which we recite in our liturgical evening prayer *In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum;* if we would dwell on them as the words by which Jesus formally sacrificed Himself on the Cross, and apply them in this sense to ourselves; then might death come to seek us, even surprise us in sleep; but it would find us where we really belong, on the Cross, intimately united with Jesus, our Priest and Victim, in His last sigh.

And our daily Communions! How useful they could be, at least from time to time, in this preparation. We preach to the people to confess as if each confession were to be their last; this, we tell them, is

the way to be always ready. But should we not also teach them to receive each Communion as if it were to be their last? This would, indeed, be a real preparation for death, which then, however and whenever it came, would find them willing victims united with Jesus. And let us not, while teaching others, neglect ourselves. When we recite the words *Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam meam in vitam æternam,* let us, at least occasionally, look upon Communion as our last union with Christ, which will guard us effectively on the way to eternal life, and this because it incorporates us more fully with the sacrifice of the Cross.

Thus we shall live in the habitual dispositions of immolation—dispositions so well expressed by the following prayer inspired by the saintly Bossuet:[1] Oh, my Savior! when I think of my death, my mind flies back to the scenes of Calvary and I no longer fear. How sweet it is to me to consider Your death which has blotted out my sins and assured me the kingdom of heaven! How sweet to think that at my dying moment You will be there in person to receive, to sanctify my expiring soul, and present it to Your Father! Come, Lord Jesus, come, for I am ready; I am impatient to be with You, to belong to You. All is consummated: nothing binds me to earth; Your love and Your kingdom alone are my eternal portion. These only do I desire, for in their possession all my fears are finally at rest; in that kingdom there is no more darkness, no more sin, but love forever. Come then, O Jesus, come, O divine

[1] Bossuet, *Méditations sur l'Evangile,* Cène, 1e p., 51e jour.

Priest and Victim, to perfect my consecration in death, so that I may belong entirely to You, and through You to God for ages without end: *Ut sit Deus omnia in omnibus. Amen.*

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LAUDETUR JESUS CHRISTUS
SUMMUS ET ÆTERNUS SACERDOS.

O MARIA, MATER SACERDOTII MEI,
TUUS SUM EGO,
SALVUM ME FAC IN ÆTERNUM.

265.322 Q
Grimal, J. G88E O
Priesthood & sacrifice of
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265.322 Q
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